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P. 1

**FOR THE FREEDOM
OF THE SEAS**

By Ralph Henry Barbour

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"Hands up!"

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6-23-23.

FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

BY
RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

AUTHOR OF
"KEEPING HIS COURSE," "HITTING THE LINE,"
"WINNING HIS GAME," ETC.



ILLUSTRATED BY
CHARLES L. WRENN

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK LONDON

1918

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To
THOMAS LATIMER
of Groton, Connecticut
with the Author's
greetings

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FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

CHAPTER I

THE WAY OF THE HUN

THE three-masted schooner *Jonas Clinton* was loafing along in a six-knot breeze some five hundred miles off the coast of France. For the time of year, the middle of October, the Atlantic in those latitudes was unusually docile and there was scarcely enough swell to slant the schooner's deck. Overhead, a moon in its first quarter was playing hide-and-seek in a bank of purple-black clouds. The night—the ship's clock in the cabin had just struck five bells—was so mild that the helmsman had not yet troubled to button his heavy reefer.

Light winds, or no wind at all, had been the *Jonas Clinton's* fortune for a month. The eastward voyage had been made in twenty-two days,

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Boston to Havre, but once rid of her cargo of lubricating oil for the armies in France, she had been forced to swing at anchor for two weeks. At last, despairing of a fair wind, Captain Troy had had the schooner towed across to Falmouth, England. Another wait had followed, a delay especially regrettable when ships were scarce and freight rates high. But at last a brisk breeze had started the *Jonas Clinton* on her homeward voyage only to peter out at the end of the second day, leaving the skipper, who, as half owner in the ship, was deeply concerned in her fortunes, decidedly glum. The skipper's frame of mind was reflected by everyone else aboard, from Mr. Cupples, the mate, down to the latest addition to the crew of eight, the tall, raw-boned Nova Scotian lad who, whatever his real name might be, was known as "Bean Pole"; though the gloom extended in a lesser degree to two inhabitants of the four hundred ton craft, Nelson Troy and Pickles.

These two were at the moment seated side by side on the forward hatch, as though awaiting this introduction. Nelson, Captain Troy's son, was seventeen, a well-built, nice-looking lad who was making his second voyage in his father's ship. He was down on the ship's papers as apprentice,

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since a merchant vessel may not carry passengers, but his position as a member of the crew was nominal rather than actual. Not, however, that he didn't take a hand when there was something to be done, for he had picked up a fair amount of sailing, and, perhaps, had inherited a taste for it. He was a broad-shouldered, healthy boy, full of fun and very fond of Pickles.

Pickles was—well, Pickles was just Pickles. First of all, he was a dog. Beyond that I hesitate to go. Leo, the big, two-fisted Swede who had sailed with Captain Troy for seven years, declared that "he ban part wolf-dog an' part big fool." But that was scarcely fair to Pickles, because, no matter how mixed he was in the matter of breed, he was certainly no fool. Even Terry, the cook, acknowledged that. No dog capable of stealing a piece of mutton as big as his head from right under the cook's nose can rightly be called a fool. And Terry didn't call him a fool, although he applied several other names to him! Visibly, Pickles was yellow as to color, shaggy as to coat, loving and faithful as to disposition. For the rest, he was long-legged and big in the shoulders, and just too much for a lapful.

Captain Troy, keeping the first watch, came along the deck from the stern, a tall, rather gaunt

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figure in the dim light, and paused where Nelson and Pickles sat. The captain was well on toward fifty and had followed the sea, boy and man, for more than thirty years, just as his father and his father's father before him had followed it. Several generations of Troys had been born within sight and sound of Casco Bay and had taken to the sea as naturally and inevitably as ducks take to water. The captain was a slow-speaking man, with a deep and pleasant voice that could, when occasion demanded, bellow like a liner's fog-horn. He was a good Master, stern but never unjust, and a good father to the boy who sat there holding the front half of the dog across his knees. Nelson not only loved his father very deeply—how deeply he was very soon to realize—but he both admired and respected him. No one could make two trips over and back with Captain Troy, watching his handling of his ship, his behavior in moments of peril and his attitude toward the men under him, without feeling admiration and respect for the simple-minded, big-hearted, cool-thinking man. The fact that Nelson's mother had died when he was eight years of age had focused all his affection on his father, and, since Nelson was an only child, had, on the other hand, concentrated all the captain's love on him. Be-

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sides being father and son they were excellent companions, and neither was quite contented when away from the other.

The captain gazed up at the half-filled fore-sail. "I'm fearing it's to be light winds all the way across," he said. "I hate the thought of going into steam at my time of life, but there's no denying that a couple of screws aft there would be a big help just now. If I knew where to pick up a small steamship I'm not sure I wouldn't take her over, son, for the next voyage. It's maddening to think of all the cargoes awaiting bottoms back home, and us wallowing along at five or six knots; and in ballast, at that!"

"Mustn't be greedy, dad," answered the boy, smiling up in the dark. "We made a pile of money this trip, didn't we?"

"Money? Yes, we did pretty well," replied the captain with satisfaction. "I've been blowing east and west, north and south most of my life, son, and this is nearly the first time that big money has come my way. We ain't rich, and I'd like to see a bit more in the bank before I quit. You'll be needing some, and so'll I when I join the fireside fleet."

"You needn't worry about me, dad. I'm going to earn my own money in a year or two."

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"Maybe, but not so soon as that. You're going to finish your education first, I'm hoping. I want you to have all the trimmings before you take the wheel. Have you thought any more about that college?"

"Not much," owned the boy. "There have been so many other things to think about, you see." His tone if not his words implied that the other things were far more interesting. "Anyway, there's time enough. I'll have to put in another year in high school, I suppose." His voice dropped dismally at the end, and the captain chuckled.

"I guess you're like all the Troys. There never was one of 'em I ever heard tell of that was much of a scholar. Your great-uncle Joab got to be a Judge of the Supreme Court, but I always suspicioned that he did it by keeping his mouth clamped down and not letting on to how little he really knew about the Law! That's one trait the Troys have generally possessed, and it's a good one."

"What, not knowing much?" laughed the boy.

"Not saying much. There's more men have talked themselves out of their jobs than you can shake a stick at. Just you remember that, son, and every time you're tempted to say something

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when you ain't got anything to say, you just clap the hatch on. And then," he added, "sit on it, just as you're doing now!" The captain craned his head a little for a look at the dim spread of the jib. "I'll feel a sight easier," he muttered, "when we're five hundred miles further west."

"You aren't afraid of U-boats, are you, dad?" asked Nelson, smiling as he pulled at the dog's ears.

"I'm not exactly afraid of them, no, but 'accidents' have happened before this, and I'm kind of fond of this little ship."

"But, dad, we're not at war with Germany. They wouldn't——"

"Well, there was the *William P. Frye*," replied the captain dryly. "They got her, didn't they? And we weren't at war with her then, neither. Any more than we were when they sank the *Lusitania*," he added bitterly.

"But I've always thought that was——was different," said Nelson, vaguely. "She was British, dad, and——"

"I know," interrupted his father roughly. "She was British, but she had American citizens aboard, and Germany knew it. I'd rather you didn't try to excuse Germany for that deed, son; I—I'm likely to lose my temper. Well, ain't it

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most time you turned in? Or are you considering taking the graveyard watch to-night?"

"Oh, it isn't really late yet," laughed the boy. "It's such a peachy night that I hate to go below. So does Pickles, don't you, you old rascal?"

Apparently he did, for he wagged a stiff tail enthusiastically and burrowed his nose further into the crook of the boy's arm.

"Well, don't make it too late," advised his father, turning away. "If I find you on deck at seven bells I'll put you in the lazaret on hard tack and water for the rest of the voyage." With which dire threat Captain Troy strode off toward the stern.

Left to themselves, boy and dog sat a few minutes longer, and then, finding that the breeze was seeking them out, arose. Nelson yawned deeply and Pickles wagged his tail, as they went sleepily aft to the companion. As Nelson's head dropped below the deck level he caught an uncertain glimpse of his father's form by the helmsman and a glowing speck that showed that Leo's pipe was drawing well. Nelson shared his father's cabin, and twenty minutes later he was sound asleep there, while Pickles, half under the bunk and half out, twitched his legs and made little sounds, dreaming, perhaps, that he was doing battle royal

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with some long-whiskered, squeaking denizen of the hold.

Seven bells had struck some time ago, when Nelson was midway between sleeping and waking, and now it was close on midnight. From across the passage came the deep snores of Mr. Cupples. The mate was a vigorous, hearty man even when he slumbered. In the dimly lighted captain's cabin Pickles, having vanquished his adversary, sighed and stretched his long legs into new positions, without waking, and the boy above, dreaming, too, doubtless, muttered faintly in his sleep. And then——

And then he awoke to chaos!

The first disturbing sound had been a dull, crackling *thud* from somewhere forward, and the schooner had reeled and shivered with the shock as though she had driven head-on to a reef. The second sound had followed so close on the heels of the first that it had been virtually but a continuation of it. Nelson was never certain that he had heard the first sound at all, for he came fully awake with his ears fairly splitting with the awful concussion that shook the ship. The noise was beyond imagination, and yet so peculiar that he knew instinctively what it meant.

An explosion!

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Confused, frightened, too, if the truth must be told, he struggled from his berth. The light was out. Somewhere in the darkness Pickles was whimpering. On deck were shouts and the rushing of heavy feet. The cabin floor slanted amazingly and Nelson, groping for the passage, found the door swung wide and had to pull himself through the aperture with a hand on each side of the frame. He remembered the dog then and called. But his heart was beating too loudly for him to know whether Pickles followed as, clinging to whatever his groping hands encountered, he made his way to the companion. As he set foot on the lowest step another rending shock shook the *Jonas Clinton*, and there was the sound of splintering wood and the crash of yards and tackle to the deck above.

He knew then. His father's half-felt fear had not been unwarranted, it seemed. Nelson's fright gave way to a swift flood of anger, and as he hastened on deck, he trembled with the tempest of his wrath.

Even in the moonlit darkness the little schooner presented a pitiable sight. She was already far down at the head. Her foremast was broken short off and the great foresail shrouded the deck and dragged over the side. The first shell from

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the unseen enemy had entered the hull aft the galley and just above the water-line and the succeeding explosion had opened the seams wide and piled the fore part of the ship with destruction. The second shot had gone high and taken the foremast ten feet from deck. As he looked, spellbound at the head of the companion, the schooner's bowsprit disappeared under the surface and the stern, with its idly swinging, deserted wheel, rose higher against the purple-black sky. Amidship on the starboard side there was confused shouting and the squeak of tackle where a boat was being lowered. Nelson hurried toward it just as with a whine, a third shell passed the stern.

There were but four men at the boat. One was Mr. Cupples, the mate, and one was Leo. The other two were sailors whom the boy didn't identify until later. He caught Mr. Cupples' arm.

"Where's dad?" he cried anxiously.

"Lower away! What? Is that you, Nelson? Are you hurt?"

"No, sir. Where's father, sir?"

"In with you, quick, lad! There'll be another shell on us in a minute."

"But I want to know where dad is! I don't see him!"

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"He's coming," said Mr. Cupples gruffly. "Skip-pers stand by to the last, lad. Over you go now."

"Well——!" And then Nelson remembered Pickles. He called him but got no answering bark nor sound of scampering feet. Pickles, then, was still below! He turned, deaf to the cries of the mate and the others, and hurried up the canted deck and plunged again into the after cabin.

"Pickles!" he called. "Pickles! Where are you?" And then he heard a whine, and went stumbling, falling into the little compartment where the floor was already an inch deep in sea water. For a moment he couldn't find the dog, but then another whine led him right and he gathered the frightened animal in his arms and hastened out again, sobbing reassurances and endearments, and all the time panic-stricken with a terror he couldn't formulate, but that had to do with the amazing fact that his father had not come for him. On deck again, he sped to the side. The little boat was in the water and as his head showed over the rail Mr. Cupples called to him to jump.

"Catch Pickles," he answered, and dropped the dog. "Is father down there? Are you there, dad?"

But it was Leo who answered. "Sure, he ban here in boat. Yump, Nels!"



Oars dashed at the water and the boat headed away.

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Nelson jumped—the distance now was but a few feet—and landed safely between thwarts. Oars dashed at the water and the boat headed away. Nelson, recovering himself, peered about. It seemed lighter here than on the schooner's deck, and it took him but an instant to learn the truth. He leaped to his feet again despairingly.

“He isn't here! You lied to me! Where is he?” he cried.

An arm pulled him back to the seat and Mr. Cupples' voice came to him from the dimness, broken and husky.

“We couldn't find him, Nelson. He must have been forward when the first shot hit us. I think he was—I'm afraid——” The mate's voice trailed off into silence. A fourth shot struck the schooner. They could see the brief scarlet glare of the bursting shell and hear the havoc caused by the flying shrapnel. But Nelson neither saw nor heard. He was staring dumbly, agonizedly into the night, while Pickles, clasped close in his arms, whimpered his sympathy.

CHAPTER II

WITH THE COAST PATROL

THE U. S. S. *Wanderer* plunged her nose into the blue-green waters of Nantucket Sound, tossed them high in glittering spray that rattled against the slanting glass of the little wheel-house—only they liked to call it the bridge on the *Wanderer*—and raced on at a good twenty knots, leaving a fine hillock of sea under her low taffrail and a long snow-white wake behind. It was a brisk, sunshiny morning in late April. A blue sky that held a half-cargo of cottony clouds grayed into mist at the horizon. A few points off the starboard bow Handkerchief Light Ship swayed her stumpy poles and marked the southern limit of the four mile shoal. Beyond, the sandy shore of Cape Cod glistened in the sunlight, and to port Nantucket Island came abreast.

The *Wanderer* was but ninety-six feet over all and was built with the slender proportions of a cigar. Barely more than a month ago she had been a private cruising yacht, but a fortnight in a

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Boston basin had changed her appearance greatly. Now she was the color of tarnished pewter from stem to stern, from keel to tip of signal pole. Her deck was bare save for a rapid fire gun at the bow and a three-pounder aft and a gray tender swung inboard amidships. Below, however, something of her former magnificence remained in the form of mahogany and egg-shell white and gold lines, but curtains and soft cushions and similar luxuries had been sternly abolished. She carried a personnel of fourteen, Naval Reserves all, for the *Wanderer* was listed as Number 167 of the Coast Patrol. Of the fourteen, two were commissioned officers, Lieutenant Hattuck and Ensign Stowell, five were petty officers and the rest were seamen, if we except that worthy and popular personage "Spuds," whose real name was Flynn and whose rating was that of ship's cook of the fourth class.

The commander was an ex-Navy man, his junior a yachtsman of experience. The chief machinist had come from a Great Lakes freighter and his mate had run a ferry in Portland Harbor. Some of the others were ex-service men, but the electrician was just out of the Radio School and three of the seamen had been swinging their hammocks in the barracks at Newport a month ago. Of the

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latter trio, one was a well set-up youth of barely eighteen, with a pair of very blue eyes and a good-looking face set in rather serious lines. There was something about the lad that impressed one with a sense of ability and determination; or perhaps it was a number of things, such as the firm molding of his chin, the straight set of his mouth, the back-throw of his broad shoulders or the quiet, direct way of speaking. In the ten days that the *Wanderer* had been on duty most of its occupants had come into nicknames, or had brought them with them, and this boy was known as "Chatty." It was Cochran, GM2C, who had labeled him the first night at sea when, clustered in the tiny forward cabin that served as forecastle, those off watch had proceeded to get acquainted. The boy, a second class seaman, had had so little to say that the gunner's mate had finally turned on him with a sarcastic: "Say, Jack, you're a chatty guy, aren't you? Come across with a few words, just to show there's no hard feeling!" For the rest of the evening Cochran had addressed him as "Chatty" and the nickname had stuck. Now, aside from the officers, it is doubtful if anyone aboard knew the boy's real name.

That one at least of the officers did was proved presently when Ensign Stowell turned from listen-

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ing to Cochran's lecture on the mechanism of the bow gun delivered to "Spuds," Hanson, radio man, and Jaynes, chief machinist, and stopped in the lee of the deck-house where "Chatty" was leaning against the life-buoy that hung there and gazing thoughtfully across the sun-flecked water to the distant green expanse of Nantucket.

"Well, Troy," said the Ensign, "seen any periscopes yet?"

Sighting a periscope was an over-used joke in the patrol service those days, but it usually brought a smile, just as it did now.

"Not yet, sir. I'd like to."

The officer laughed. "By Jove, so would I! But I guess you and I'll have to cross the briny before we have any such luck as that. You came from the Newport Station, didn't you? What do they say there about getting across? The Reserves, I mean."

"A good many have gone, sir. There was a detail of seventy left the day I did. They were to go to Halifax and board a transport for the other side. Nothing was known beyond that, but the general idea was that they were to be sprinkled around the destroyers over there."

The officer sighed. "I've done my best to make it, but this is what I drew. Oh, well, some-

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thing may happen even here. You know the *Smith's* men stick to it that they dodged a torpedo off the Maine coast the other day."

The boy smiled again, and the Ensign, watching, chuckled. "Just my idea," he agreed, although the other hadn't spoken. "Still, it would be something to even *think* you saw a 'fish,' eh? There'd be a dime's worth of excitement in that! How did you happen to go into the Reserves, Troy?"

"I wanted to get into action, sir, and the folks I talked with thought I'd get there quicker if I enlisted in the Reserves than in the Navy. I'm not so sure now, though. Maybe I made a mistake." The *Wanderer* called gruffly twice to a tug ahead and the tug unhurriedly replied. Ensign Stowell spoke to the man at the wheel, through the open door of the house, and turned back again.

"Blessed if I can tell you," he answered. "Looks to me, though, as if they were going to need every man they can get before this shindy is over. Well I hope they'll shove me over before long! I didn't count on serving in a two-by-twice motor boat. Have you been to sea much?"

"I made two trips on a sailing vessel, sir, with

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my father. The last time was in the Fall. The Germans got her."

"Got her! You mean sank her? Where was this? What ship was she?"

"The *Jonas Clinton*, sir. We were shelled about five hundred miles from the coast on the voyage back."

"The *Clinton*! Of course, I remember that! So you were the captain's son that was picked up by a British destroyer, eh? I remember reading about it. That was in November, wasn't it?"

"October, sir: the sixteenth when we were picked up. They got the schooner about midnight of the fourteenth."

"Yes, yes, they found four of you in a small boat——"

"Five, sir, and a dog."

"Was it five? I remember about the dog. The papers made a sort of hero of you, didn't they? Had you risking your life to get the dog off, or something?"

"The papers," replied Nelson Troy gravely, "printed a good deal that wasn't so. I couldn't very well leave Pickles behind, you see. And I guess there wasn't much danger."

"But, I say, Troy, your father!" The en-

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sign's voiced dropped sympathetically. "He was lost, wasn't he?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm sorry I rattled on so about it! I'd forgotten that. By Jove, I don't blame you for wanting to get a whack at those murderers! You had a hard time, boy. Was your father killed outright?"

Nelson's eyes closed slightly and two vertical creases appeared above his straight nose. "I don't think so, sir. You see, they couldn't find him. Mr. Cupples, the mate, thought he might have been forward when the first shell struck and been knocked overboard. And I suppose that's the way it was, but dad was a good swimmer, and unless he was wounded first I don't see why we didn't find him. That shell cleaned out the forecastle and killed five of the crew, but it couldn't have hit anyone on deck, as I figure it. Dad might have been standing square over where the shell burst, perhaps. It's a sort of a mystery, sir, and I don't know what to think, only—somehow—I can't make up my mind that he's dead."

"Perhaps not," replied the other thoughtfully. "It's just as well to keep on hoping. He may turn up some day. Still, there's this to consider, Troy.

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If he was knocked into the sea and was picked up you would have heard from him long before this."

"Unless he was picked up by the U-boat that attacked us," answered the boy quietly.

"By the U-boat? Why, yes, that's possible, of course. Do you know whether she searched the schooner before she sank her?"

"We couldn't be sure, sir. She didn't show any lights, of course, but it was sort of half moonlight, and after we'd rowed off about two miles we thought we saw something approach the schooner. We didn't stay around long, because we were afraid they would see us and start shelling."

"I see. But you stood by the ship long enough to have rescued your father if he had been afloat, eh?"

"Yes, sir, we rowed around for about fifteen minutes. Then the shells were getting pretty thick and the sailors wouldn't stay any longer so we rowed out of range. That's what I don't understand. If dad wasn't on board, and Mr. Cupples says they searched all over for him, he must have been in the water. But we couldn't find him there, and——" The boy's voice trailed into silence.

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The ensign laid a sympathetic hand on his shoulder. "He might have been there, just the same," he said hopefully. "Stranger things have happened. I don't suppose he was wearing a life-belt."

"No, sir, none of us were. We didn't really expect any trouble, although dad had his mind on it that night. I remember his saying he'd be easier when we were out of the submarine zone. But I no more expected what happened than— than nothing at all!"

"Of course you didn't! Who would? Oh, wait till we get a shot at them! We've got a lot of scores to pay off, Troy, and, by the Great Horned Spoon, we'll do it! Now I understand why you're so eager for service, Troy, and I hope you'll soon get across where things are happening. I know that we're taught that revenge is sinful, but——"

The ensign shook his head.

"I don't think it is exactly revenge I want," replied Nelson thoughtfully. "Killing a thousand Germans wouldn't bring dad back, if he's really gone, but things like that aren't right, sir, and I'd like to do my share in stopping them. No nation should be allowed to act like a pirate, to attack neutral ships on the high seas and murder

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defenseless men. But of course you can't teach nations of that sort by just talking to them; you've got to hurt them first. That, as I figure it, is why we've gone into this war, sir. Anyway, I guess it's why I've gone into it."

"Right! 'For the Freedom of the Seas!' That's our motto, and before we're done we'll write it big over every ocean, Troy. And across the sky we'll write 'Humanity!'" The ensign ceased abruptly, smiled as though at his own earnestness, and nodded. "Good luck, Troy. You've got the right idea, son."

He passed aft and disappeared down the companion that led to the officers' quarters, leaving Nelson again to his thoughts. But after a moment he shook them off, left the lee of the bridge and went forward. Cross Rip Light Ship was nearly abeam now and Martha's Vineyard was coming fast across the flashing water. Staples, seaman gunner, was lavishing good vaseline on the bow gun and singing a song as he worked. He broke off at Nelson's approach and nodded gayly.

"Think I'll ever have a chance to point this little toy, Chatty?" he asked. "Say, wouldn't it surprise those chaps on the light ship to drop a shell alongside? I'd like to do it just to see

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'em jump! What's on the luff's mind today, do you think?"

"I don't know," replied Nelson. "We're making for New Bedford, though. There was a lot of sizzling in the radio room an hour ago."

"Maybe someone saw a porpoise," hazarded Staples. "And this is what I left a happy home for! Well, it's a fine, free life, with nothing to do but work. There, if anyone finds any rust on that gun it won't be my fault. Isn't it most time for grub?"

"Pretty near, but I guess they'll wait till we're at anchor."

"Great Scott! What's the the big idea? Don't they know I'm hungrier than a shark? Anchored be blowed! Why, that'll be the middle of the afternoon!"

"Not at this rate, Lanky. We're doing twenty and New Bedford's only about thirty-five miles."

"Yeah, and it's seven bells now," replied Staples disconsolately. "Some folks haven't any heart at all. I'm so near starved I could eat that grease!"

"I guess that would fetch about five dollars in Germany," said Nelson, "if what we hear is so. They'd probably butter their bread with it."

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"It's a sight better spread than they deserve," grunted the gunner. "Axle grease is what those criminals ought to have. Help me with this jacket, will you?"

Nelson lent a hand and the canvas covering was drawn back over the gun and laced tight. Staples wiped his hands thoughtfully on a bunch of waste. "Know what I'd rather have happen than a plate of beans and a quart of coffee, Chatty?" he asked, gazing westward over the plunging bow. Nelson didn't and said so. "Well, I'd rather see a U-boat come up right over where that gull's dipping. That's my rather."

"You're likely to see it," laughed Nelson.

"Why shouldn't I?" demanded the other. "What's the use of us fellers kiting around here if there's never going to be any fun? Mark my words, Chatty, some day you're going to be surprised. Government isn't paying us wages to give us sea trips. Not by a long shot! We're here because we're needed here. It's Lanky Staples that's telling you!"

CHAPTER III

THE LONELY REEF

THE *Wanderer* slid into New Bedford shortly after one o'clock, fluttered a greeting to the torpedo boat *Hollis*, lying off Fort Point, and dropped anchor in the inner harbor. There was liberty when dinner was over, and Nelson and a half-dozen others spent the afternoon exploring the streets of the old whaling town. The *Wanderer* replenished fuel tanks and stole out again shortly after dusk, just as the lights were appearing along shore. A group of Jackies on the after deck of the *Hollis* cheered and shouted raillery as the little patrol sped past so close one could have counted the chevrons of their rating badges. Billy Masters, apprentice seaman, stopped by the forecastle break, where Nelson was on lookout duty, and jerked his head in the direction of the receding torpedo boat.

"I suppose those fellows think a lot of themselves because they're on a regular boat, eh?"

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Bet you anything you like, Chatty, we have a lot more fun than they do."

"Shouldn't wonder," answered Nelson. "What's that thing bucking along there? Looks like a mine-layer, doesn't she?"

"Yes. What do you suppose she was before they patched her up and painted her gray? Looks like a little old tub that used to run excursions on the river when I was a kid back home."

"Where was that, Billy?"

"Portsmouth, Ohio. Ever there?" Nelson shook his head while his gaze followed the little blunt-nosed, high-decked steamer that came wallowing toward them from the open sea. Billy Masters sighed. "It's a swell little burg, and I wish I was back there," he murmured. Then, as the *Wanderer's* search light, atop the wheel-house, jumped into life and sent a long inquiring path across the darkening water, he added more cheerfully: "If I was, though, I'd want to be back here again, so what's the use?"

The approaching craft bellowed once hoarsely and the *Wanderer* replied. "Sounds like she had a sore throat," muttered Billy. "Say, what's up tonight?"

"Why?"

"Oh, the skipper's sort of excited like and so's

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the other. And Spuds says the *Hollis's* captain was aboard this afternoon and he and our skipper and the junior were chinning for about an hour down there. And Ole's wearing a sort of wise look on his ugly Swedish mug like he knew a lot more'n he wanted to say. Let me tell you something. I don't believe Ole can hear a blamed thing on that wireless of his. He just puts that black thing around his head and frowns and writes on pieces of paper. Then he takes 'em in to the skipper and the skipper, being in the plot, nods his old head and opens a little book and makes believe to decode the silly stuff. Why, it stands to reason that an aerial no bigger'n a back-yard clothes line can't pick up much!"

Nelson laughed. "You tell that to Ole. He'll drop you overboard."

"Huh, I ain't afraid of any tow-headed galoot like him, even if he did go to school for three months and has doodaddies on his sleeve. I could have been a radio man if I'd wanted to."

"Why didn't you?" asked Nelson.

"'Cause when there's something doing I want to be in it. No sitting around on a stool for mine, getting my head knocked off and jabbing out, 'Shell has just entered radio room, killing operator. Good bye!' That may be heroic and get

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your picture in the paper, but it don't get you much else!"

The *Wanderer* left Dumpling Rock Light on her starboard and swung her bow more to the west. By nine o'clock, down in the "forecastle," they were predicting a visit to New York or Brooklyn, and Perry, first-class shipfitter, was licking his lips in anticipation.

"I've got friends down there," he said, half closing his eyes and swaying ecstatically back and forth on the edge of a bunk in time to the rocking of the boat. "They'll ask me to dinner. There'll be chicken, like as not, and lots of pie. Maybe two or three kinds of pie." He looked around to see how the announcement affected the others and was disappointed. "Maybe lemon pie with suds atop," he added desperately.

Lanky Staples grunted. "You can have all the pie you want," he said. "Me for a real feed on Broadway. I know the place, too. A stack of wheats as high as that——" He held his hands some fourteen inches apart—"and about a pint of maple syrup, and two or three cups of real coffee, not the stuff Spuds gives us——"

"Yeah, I know the place, too," interrupted the cook sarcastically. "You get a couple of flies in the syrup an' they don't charge you a cent for

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'em! You wouldn't know good coffee from a cup of bilge water, you long-legged giraffe!"

"Think we'll get liberty?" asked Endicott longingly. "I got folks out to Flatbush."

"We won't get that much liberty," replied Lanky, gently. "Maybe we'll get a day. Why don't you telegraph your folks to come half-way and meet you?"

Their dreams of the gayety of New York were doomed, however, to a sad awakening. When the morning watch went on at four the *Wanderer* was swinging at anchor in a choppy sea with nothing in sight in the gray darkness but a stretch of ghostly breakers a half-mile to the west. As the light grew a beach became visible beyond the surf and, finally, a low island stretched before them. Nelson, coming on deck at eight, viewed it curiously. It appeared to be about a half-mile long and, he guessed, scarcely more than a quarter of that in width. At no place did it rise more than ten feet above the ocean. In the gray, cold light of a cloudy day it was about as desolate and lonely a spot as one could imagine. Not even a hut broke the monotony of the sky-line, but at the farther end a cluster of low, wind-tossed, misshapen trees made a darker blot on the expanse of sand and beach grass. There were low

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bushes here and there; bayberry, probably, and sweet-gale; and in one place, not far from the *Wanderer's* unquiet anchorage, a ledge cropped a few feet above the sand. Gulls fluttered over the island, but they constituted the only signs of life.

"What do you make of it, Chatty?" asked Cochran, gunner's mate, ranging alongside. Nelson shook his head. "Doesn't look as if we'd come all this way to picnic on the beach, does it?" He looked around in all directions. "Where are we? That's what I'd like to know. We've been pretty well over these waters for a week or so, but I'll swear to goodness I never saw that cheerful looking reef before."

"Nor I," said Nelson. "It must be one of the Elizabeths, don't you think?"

"No, I know the whole bunch: Nonamesset, Uncatena, Naushon, Pasque and Nashawena, Cuttyhunk and Penikese. Sounds like something out of Longfellow, don't it? 'Hiawatha,' maybe. No, we're further from New Bedford than any of those. We didn't drop anchor until about four bells, and we were doing fourteen most of the time. There's some sand banks like that—" he nodded at the desolate expanse before them—"south of the Vineyard, I've heard. They get

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down on the charts as reefs and then the sea kicks a lot of sand over them and they're islands. And maybe ten years after that they're just rocks again. A couple of good gales tears them all to pieces. This one looks as if it had been here quite a spell, though." Cochran broke the wrapper of a package of chewing gum, proffered it to Nelson and stowed a piece between his teeth. "Anyway," he went on when he had got the gum working nicely, "you can be sure of one thing, Chatty. We didn't come down here and slop around half the night in this nasty chop without some reason. Maybe that island's one of these German submarine bases you read about."

Nelson smiled. "They might have chosen a more cheerful one, I'd say. We'll find out pretty quick, I guess, for there's the Old Man now."

But the solution of the mystery was not due to be solved just yet. Lieutenant Hattuck, very erect and smart in his uniform, walked forward to the bridge. Then he and the junior made their way to the bow and, standing by the gray-jacketed gun, examined the shore through their glasses and talked together for several minutes. Green, Ole Hanson's relief, climbed out of the wireless room and approached them with a fluttering wisp of paper in his hand. Action followed

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closely after the captain had cast his eye over the message and handed it to the ensign. Up came the anchor and the *Wanderer* crept slowly along the shore, the ensign himself at the wheel, and Quartermaster's Mate Jones keeping an anxious watch at the bow. When nearly opposite the easternmost end of the island, which curved slightly to the south, the small boat was ordered lowered and Mr. Stowell, yielding the wheel, gave his orders.

"Jones, pick four men for a landing party. Arm with automatics."

"Yes, sir. Do I go along?"

"Certainly. Hustle now."

"Right, sir! Staples, Troy, Endicott and Masters! Get a jump on! Don't forget your cartridge belts!"

Four minutes later they were in the little boat, her tiny engine sending her bobbing crazily over the gray-green water. Ensign Stowell was in the stern sheets and Jones brooded over the engine. They beached near the little forest of twisted trees, leaped into the shallow surf and carried the anchor ashore.

"Draw your bean-shooters," directed the officer, "but keep the safety on. Come ahead, keep down pretty well and don't talk."

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It was the matter of eighty or a hundred yards to where the straggling trees began. They climbed quietly up the sloping beach, the ensign leading, and paused where the high tides of winter had left a ridge of sand, loosely clad with grass and wild pea. Before them there lay the wind-rippled surface of the island, flat and unbroken save for the patch of trees, and beyond, the sea again. Nelson thought he could discern what looked like land where the horizon lay, but could not be certain. What he was certain of was a tiny dark speck that bobbed about some two miles away to the north and could be nothing else than a boat. Mr. Stowell gave a grunt and pulled his glasses from their case and leveled them. After a long moment he returned them, faced the *Wanderer*, circling slowly about off the beach, and waved an arm semaphore fashion. The captain, watching from the deck, waved an answer. A minute later, with her engines humming, she was standing straight out to sea.

The officer led the way again, bearing to the right until they were well hidden from the approaching boat by the trees. Then they went forward and gained the edge of the tiny forest and, following the example set by the ensign, threw themselves down on the sand amidst the

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crackling branches of bayberry bushes to which a few sere leaves and odorous gray berries still clung. The dwarfed trees ahead were pitch pine, although here and there a leafless wild cherry was struggling for existence. Ensign Stowell conversed in low tones with the quartermaster's mate and alternately peered through a vista in the grove at the coming boat and cast roving glances about the trees, much, thought Nelson, as though he were looking for birds' nests!

"What's the game, Chatty?" muttered Endicott, pulling himself nearer. "German spies?"

"Don't know. Tell you later."

"Much obliged. I say, look where the *Wanderer* is!"

Nelson looked. The patrol boat was a good three miles south and was now running eastward at half-speed, presenting a fine imitation of a person minding his own business. Evidently, concluded Nelson, the plan was to keep out of sight until the persons in the small motor boat—for that was what the craft now showed itself to be—had landed. Then, doubtless, the *Wanderer* would turn back. But he was still puzzled, for the patrol boat could, naturally, run rings about the smaller one or, if it pleased her, blow her

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clean out of the water. There was, then, evidently more to the operation than just capture.

The approaching motor boat was making slow work of it, and hard, for the sea was decidedly rough today for such small craft; but she came pluckily on, bobbing about like a cork and, doubtless, shipping water with every toss. They could see her occupants now, three men at least, and possibly four. The smoke from the exhaust left a trail of lighter gray against the gray of sea and sky. Masters was examining his automatic with a nonchalance that didn't deceive anyone.

The motor boat made straight for the beach on the north side of the island, which today was also the lee side. Nelson could see her no longer now, but he heard Ensign Stowell say softly to Jones: "Four of them. They're all there, then."

Even when the boat had grounded and her crew had sprung up to their knees in water and waded ashore with the painter they were too far off for their features to be distinguished. Nelson squirmed a bit to the right and found a place from which he could watch. The quartette pushed an anchor into the sand well above the tide, and Nelson saw that a second one had been dropped from her stern. The boat was surprisingly tiny for such a sea and he was forced to credit the

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unknown crew with a good deal of courage. They were coming up the rise of the further beach now, one carrying a square wooden box that looked heavy as it bumped against his leg at each stride. They walked in single file, the man with the box bringing up the rear. The leader was not tall, but there was something authoritative in the way he carried his squarely-built figure. In spite of the black rain-coat which shrouded him he looked military. The others, similarly protected from the weather and the sea, were distinctly civilian.

Just as they left the beach and gained the higher level of the island the leader stopped abruptly and pointed to the eastward. Nelson, following the direction of his hand, descried the *Wanderer*, running northward now, almost an indistinguishable gray object against the sea. After a minute the four men came on, walking a little more hurriedly, and entered the wood on the further side. For a moment or two they were visible between the trees, and then they disappeared as suddenly as though the earth had swallowed them!

Jones turned and looked inquiringly at Ensign Stowell, but the latter shook his head.

"Wait," he said softly.

CHAPTER IV

A BATTLE UNDERGROUND

FIVE minutes passed; ten. The *Wanderer* was out of sight now beyond the trees. Ensign Stowell beckoned and his little command drew closer.

"We want those chaps," he said in low tones. "They've got a hiding place of some sort over there; probably a hut. There are six of us. Have you all got watches?"

Everyone nodded.

"Good. I'll go around to the further side, Jones will take the next post on the west, then Endicott. You stay here, Masters. Staples you will cut around to the east and Troy will go half-way. Five minutes by your watches from the time I start off you will all close in. Don't fire a shot until I give the word unless you are fired on. Then shoot to stop your man but not kill him. Make as little noise as you can, watch for your friends and don't mistake them for the men

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we're after. Get it, all of you? All right. Look at your watches."

The ensign rose and started eastward around the edge of the straggling grove. Jones followed, and Staples. After a minute or so Endicott and Nelson quietly went their separate ways, leaving a somewhat anxious looking youth behind in the shape of Billy Masters. Nelson kept to the sand so that his feet would tread on no crackling twigs, and, when he had traversed what he believed to be the proper distance, knelt and looked at the watch on the leather strap about his wrist. He had still two and a half minutes to wait. From his place he could see the *Wanderer* again. She was swinging westward now, perhaps two miles away, but one who didn't know would never have suspected her of interest in this forlorn stretch of reef and sand. Nelson thought he could make out a moving figure on her forecastle deck and wondered if it was Cochran impatiently awaiting a chance to ram a cartridge into that bow gun. Save for the roar of the waves and the plaintive cries of the gulls everything was still. The seconds ticked themselves slowly away. A minute more now to wait. A half minute—fifteen seconds—ten—five——

He arose, revolver in hand, and stepped for-

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ward into the gloom of the pines. In spite of his care a twig snapped occasionally under his feet as, dodging queer, misshapen branches, he went on toward the center of the wood. The sand was soft and mixed with pine needles and clothed here and there with sad-looking vines already showing new leaves. The trees were more scattered than he had thought, and were twisted strangely by the force of the gales. After a minute he caught sight of something moving ahead of him and, with a leap of his heart, swung his automatic up. But it was Endicott. A second rustling brought Masters to view. Converging, they kept on. One by one the other members of the landing party drew near, Staples last of all. The ensign was clearly nonplused. He looked enquiringly from face to face. Each man shook his head. They stood in silence for a minute. The sound of the surf was strangely hushed here in the center of the little wood. Nelson could hear his watch tick. The ensign was looking toward the tops of the small trees, pivoting slowly on his heel. Jones was doing the same. Nelson, suspecting an airplane, looked, too, but saw nothing except the gray sky through the loose branches. The ensign raised a hand warningly and stepped a dozen paces to the eastward and repeated his

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queer survey, and then to the north. The others watched and waited in silence.

Suddenly they saw the ensign's roving gaze fix itself steadily on some point almost above his head. They craned their necks, but saw nothing. The ensign's head moved again and finally he walked away from them, step by step, still gazing upward. Nelson, for one, was fairly consumed by curiosity and would have remained so several moments longer had not his wandering gaze surprised Lanky Staples in the act of forming the word "wireless" with his lips. Then Nelson understood and peered eagerly into the topmost branches and, after an instant, saw what the officer had seen. Once detected the apparatus was startlingly evident. Twenty paces away from where Nelson stood, a twenty-foot sapling had been lashed to one of the taller trees. Some forty feet away another sapling, not quite so long, had been secured. Between them, invisible to a careless gaze, stretched two fine copper wires, perhaps two feet apart. From above they might have been detected, but from any point seaward they were invisible.

The ensign was stepping softly back toward the little group, a quiet smile on his lean face. "We've got them," he whispered. He bent a

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thumb over a shoulder. "They've dug a hole back there. See that darkest pine, the one with the branches low to the ground? There's a trap-door there. You stay here until I beckon. I want to make sure that it's unlocked. When I beckon, come quietly, but keep out of range, for they may start popping."

The ensign crept slowly off toward the indicated spot and presently they saw him stoop. A second later he straightened again and beckoned.

"Come on," said Jones softly.

They joined the ensign. Half hidden by the drooping branches of the tree, and raised a bare inch above the sandy floor of the forest, was a square of wood, some eighteen inches across, of matched boards painted gray and sprinkled with sand while still wet. The ensign pointed to a barely defined path that led toward the northern beach and looked accusingly at Jones, and Jones, observing, shook his head sadly and stuck out a dubious lower lip. But there was no opportunity for excuses, had he had any to offer, for the ensign noiselessly raised the trap, revealing a ladder which, at first startled glance, seemed to lead far into the bowels of the earth. At the foot of it was a glow of light. As their eyes grew accustomed to the gloom of the narrow shaft, revetted

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carefully with planking, they saw that the bottom was after all but a dozen or fourteen feet below them. And, as they looked they heard plainly the crackling of a wireless and the low sound of voices.

Ensign Stowell studied the situation a moment and then he leaned toward Jones and they spoke together softly. Jones passed on the orders. "Lanky, you come next. Then Chatty, then you, Endy. You stay up here, Billy, and watch. If any of them come up the ladder, drop 'em. All right, sir!"

The ensign slipped back the safety catch of his automatic and noiselessly lowered himself into the aperture. Jones, revolver ready, watched anxiously. Rung by rung the ensign descended. When his head had disappeared Jones followed. Those above, listening with painful intentness, heard scarcely a sound from the shaft. Staples scowled impatiently. Then he, too, set foot on the ladder, and at that instant they heard the ensign drop the last six feet and heard his voice cry:

"Hands up!"

Jones was gone now, Staples was descending rapidly and Nelson was following. The gray daylight disappeared as the latter feverishly

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searched for the rungs with impatient feet. From below came a dim yellow radiance. He heard the sharp report of a revolver, voices, the thud of Staples' body as he spurned the last rungs of the ladder. He looked down. Jones was flattened against the wall, but he cried a warning and dropped.

He landed on his feet, collided with Jones and sprawled sideways. Another shot rang out and he was conscious of a blow on his arm under the shoulder and of Jones leaping across him. Then he struggled to his feet. Smoke wreathed and eddied in the dim light of a single lamp that hung from a nail in one corner, and made a haze through which he saw dimly. One of the enemy lay prone on the earth floor with blood trickling from his head. A second, a smoking pistol still in his grasp, stood with his hands above him. A third, surprised at the instrument, the receiver still in place was slewed half-way around on the box that served for chair and with drooping jaw and frightened eyes raised his hands, too, in token of surrender while his furtive glances swept the room for an avenue of escape. But the fourth and last member of the quartet was still unsubdued. It was he who had fired the last shot, and, although his revolver now lay on the ground

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under trampling feet, he fought fiercely, desperately in the clutch of Jones, uttering all the while the guttural, savage growls of an animal. Back and forth they swayed, lurched against the man on the box, who cringed away from them, stumbled back to the center of the floor again. The ensign and Staples, their revolvers covering the others, watched the struggle for an instant. Then, just as Endicott joined them, Jones thrust a leg behind his adversary and sent him sprawling heavily. He was on him in the instant, astride his chest, pinioning his arms to the floor and the encounter was over. "Take that man's revolver, Troy," directed the ensign.

Nelson stepped across the prostrate enemy on the floor and approached the man who was standing. As he did so he tried to return his own weapon to its holster but found to his surprise and dismay that he could not raise it from where it hung at his side. So he used his left hand instead and took the revolver from the upstretched hand of the captive.

"Search him," said the ensign, and Nelson, giving the revolver to Endicott, went over him without finding any other weapon.

"Stand over there against the wall," com-

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manded the officer, "and keep your hands well up. Now, you on the box, stand up."

The wireless operator had difficulty in obeying because his legs were not inclined to hold him, but Endicott helped him, more forcibly than politely, and he too was searched, without result, and sent to join his companion. By that time Jones' adversary was quiet and he was allowed to get up.

"Back to the wall there, please," said the ensign. "Jones, you and Staples watch those men. If they lower their hands an inch, shoot." He stooped over the man who lay unconscious from a blow with the butt of a revolver and examined the wound. "He will come around in a few minutes," he said. "See any water here, Troy?"

"No, sir."

"He will have to wait then. Now let's see what's here."

He went to the bench on which were the wireless instruments and papers and gave his attention to the latter. Nelson, conscious of a dull pain in his right arm, returned his revolver to the holster with his left hand and then looked curiously around him.

The subterranean apartment was much larger than he had expected to see, being fully five paces

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long by four wide. The walls and floor were of hard-packed sand, the roof of heavy timbers supported by posts of unpeeled cedar set at intervals along the walls. Although the floor must have been a full two feet below the ocean level it was scarcely more than moist. Three narrow two-inch boards ran from wall to wall at the end of the chamber opposite the ladder and served to hold the instruments of the wireless outfit: battery, jars, coils, detector, spark gap, condenser, switches and key. The discarded receiver swung over the edge from its cords. As was discovered later, the wires to the aerial were led along the roof and up a corner of the shaft. At the right of the bench a green tin lamp was supported by a nail driven in a post. There was no furniture except the empty box that had done duty as a chair. Some nails in the supporting posts held the coats and hats of the four conspirators. A box of safety matches had been spilled and its contents lay scattered on the ground.

Nelson had no difficulty in picking out the leader of the four, the one whose bearing at a distance had stamped him as military. It was he who had fought so desperately with Jones and who now, somewhat the worse for the encounter, stood straight against the wall, hands upheld and

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a sneering and haughty smile on his good-looking face. As Nelson observed him he spoke to the ensign.

“What you find there will be of no use to you,” he said. “If you seek to prove us guilty of anything unlawful, sir, you are doomed to disappointment.” He spoke in very precise English which might well have deceived his hearer until the latter had viewed the typically German countenance with its rather small gray eyes under heavy brows, its somewhat aquiline nose, high cheeks, carefully waxed mustaches and general expression of arrogance.

“We will let others decide that,” replied the ensign coldly. He bundled the few papers and a small black leatherette-covered book together and placed them with care in the inner pocket of his jacket. Then: “Place these instruments, as many as you can, back in this box, Troy,” he directed. “Hello, what’s the matter with your arm?”

“I think a bullet got me, sir.”

“Let me see. I should say so! Get his sleeve out of the way, Endicott. Better cut it. That’s it.” He made a tourniquet above the wound from which the blood was running freely. “You go on up, lad. Call Masters down to help you.”

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He turned then to the prisoners. "You will march to the ladder, one at a time, and wait outside. There is no use trying to escape, for a patrol boat is lying off the beach. Besides, you will be shot instantly the moment you make a break. Lieutenant Haegel, you first, please."

The man started at the sound of his name and two white disks appeared at his cheek-bones. But he bowed, smiled ironically and asked: "I may lower my hands, I presume?"

"Yes. Go first, Staples. Now, then——"

Outside, Nelson, suddenly feeling faint, sat on the sand and tried to keep the trees from swaying. He saw Staples emerge, and then the German addressed as Lieutenant Haegel, but no others, for just then he toppled quietly over on the ground.

CHAPTER V

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

MANY of the subsequent details Nelson failed to see, for he was put aboard the *Wanderer* and consigned to his bunk, after which Sawyer, machinist's mate and the nearest thing to a surgeon that the boat boasted, made a fairly neat job of cleansing and bandaging the wound.

"The bullet's in there yet, Chatty," he said with what sounded like professional satisfaction. "I can feel it and——"

"Ouch! So can I!" affirmed Nelson.

"Sure! But a doc will have it out in no time. If it hasn't bust the bone you'll be lucky, though." With which cheering observation Sawyer went his way and Nelson laid there and ruefully considered his luck and tried to picture, through the evidence of his ears, what was going on "top-side."

Half an hour after the surprise party in the cave, the four prisoners were safely aboard,

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

Cochran with much gusto had put a three-inch shell through their motor boat and the *Wanderer* was hiking back to New Bedford. There was a conversation between the captain and Lieutenant Haegel in the after cabin on the way back, attended by Ensign Stowell, but what was said no one else aboard ever knew. Nelson's personal interest in the affairs of the four conspirators ended soon after he had worried down a small portion of diluted broth, for he went to sleep and slept until the *Wanderer* reached port. It was the rattling of the winch that aroused him. Presently Ensign Stowell entered.

"How's the arm, Troy?" he enquired. "I was down here an hour ago, but you were sleeping."

"It doesn't hurt, sir," replied Nelson, not very truthfully.

"Good! I'm going to send you up to the hospital and have that bullet out. You'd better stay there a few days. No use trying to use your arm until the stiffness has gone. When they discharge you, report back on board. We'll be glad to see you again. I'll send one of the men to help you dress. Good luck, Troy."

It was Billy Masters who appeared to act the rôle of valet, but Billy divided between resentment at being kept out of the underground fracas

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and elation over the successful outcome of the *Wanderer's* first engagement with the enemy. He expressed no sympathy for Nelson, but on the contrary regarded him with envy. While he handed Nelson his clothes and helped him to get into them he rattled on with his news.

"Some haul that was, Chatty, believe me. This fellow with the waxed mustache is a German army officer. He's been living over at a place called Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard pretending his name was Schmitt or something. Made believe he was an American citizen and said he was writing a book about the island and its history and all that. The others don't amount to much. One's a German named Anhalt and another's a sort of Russian; I forget what sort. The fellow who did the telegraphing is a poor mutt they picked up in Canada. Guess he hasn't got any nationality. Seems the Secret Service has been after this Haegel guy for months but couldn't find him. They knew he was in the country, though, and suspected he'd be mixed up in some wireless stunt. A couple of days ago the Canadian—if that's what he is, which I don't believe, because he don't look like any Canadian I ever saw—goes into a drug store in New Bedford and gets a prescription filled. He had to wait awhile

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for it, you see, and while he was waiting he leans on the counter and does like this, see? Like he was working a telegraph key. Well, the drug fellow was one of these wireless fiends before the government put 'em out of business and he listened to what the guy was tapping out. First he says, 'Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up'! like that, over and over. Then he says a lot of figures that don't mean anything to the drug fellow, and after that some more nonsense. And he gets his medicine and goes out. But the drug fellow gets to thinking about him. He's seen the guy around for about a month and he don't ever seem to have anything special to do. So that evening he goes and tells his story to a fellow he knows who's some sort of a United States attorney or something. The attorney hands it along to the Secret Service sleuths who've been snooping around looking for a wireless station somewhere on the Cape, do you see? After that it was easy. They find out where this poor guy lives and watch him and they see this Anhalt fellow come sneaking around at night and they hears 'em make a date for this morning at four o'clock and hears 'em speak of that island back there. The *Hollis* got the job first, but she had another date up the coast and so hands it over to us. What this

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Haegel fellow was doing was getting news of sailings from American ports from some pal in New York or somewhere by mail and then going over to that island and sending it by wireless to Swedish and Norwegian ships out to sea. All they had to do was pass it on when they got near enough the other side. Easy, eh? Don't you say anything about it, for no one's supposed to know."

"Where did you hear it?" asked Nelson.

Billy blinked and hesitated. Finally: "Well, I was leaning over the rail aft last night after we left New Bedford and the cap and the junior was talking it over in the cabin and it sort of floated out!"

"You made believe you didn't know anything about it!" charged Nelson. Billy Masters grinned.

"Sure! A fellow don't repeat what he ain't supposed to know, does he?"

"What are you doing now?" Nelson laughed.

"Oh, it don't matter now. It's all over. Gee, you're a lucky guy, Chatty. You get swell grub in the hospitals!"

After a week of it, however, Nelson didn't agree with Billy. But a minor surgical case such as he was is not likely to find hospital food quite satisfying. After the first two days Nelson's

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normally healthy appetite returned in its full vigor and more than once he would gladly have exchanged his rations for the solid "chow" of the *Wanderer's* forecastle. The bullet had slightly splintered the bone of the upper arm. The doctor called it the "humerus," a name for it which Nelson entirely disapproved of. Two weeks was the period of convalescence, in any case, and for a full fortnight Nelson mooned around the hospital and the town. During that time the *Wanderer* came into port but once and Billy Masters and Lanky Staples came to see him and told him of their doings. He hadn't missed much in the way of excitement, however, for the patrol boat had done nothing more adventurous than fire at a butter firkin, narrowly escape collision with a trawler in a fog and back into a wharf at Provincetown. Lanky expressed disgust at the monotonous emptiness of existence and Billy hinted darkly at deserting and enlisting in the British Army in Canada if things didn't pick up pretty soon.

Nelson had plenty of time for thought during that dragging fortnight, and the more he thought the more he was inclined to agree with Lanky and Billy. He had enlisted in the Naval Reserves because he wanted to fight the Germans.

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Apprehending a spy or two might be useful work, but it wasn't to his mind vital enough to the matter in hand, which was beating Germany. He had spoken very nearly the truth when he had told Ensign Stowell that it wasn't exactly revenge for a personal injury inflicted that he sought, but he was, after all, quite human, and there were times when revenge seemed very desirable to him. He still refused to believe, in the face of all probability, that his father was really dead, although none of his relatives up in Maine shared his confidence. Nelson's nearest relation now was his Uncle Peter, a mild-mannered, elderly man who had once served as mate on a lumber schooner but who now eked out a scant living as proprietor of a little store in the home town. Uncle Peter firmly believed that his younger brother was dead, and, or so it had seemed to Nelson, had taken a sort of sad satisfaction in so believing. He had frowned on the boy's expressed determination of entering the Navy and had even done what little was in his power to thwart him. After a fortnight at home, a home now presided over by an ancient, sharp-featured woman housekeeper whom Nelson had grown into the habit of calling "Aunt Mehitabel," although she was no relation, he had bidden a constrained good-bye to Uncle

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Peter and a sad one to Pickles and, possessed of the munificent sum of eighty-odd dollars, had made his way to Boston. There a cousin by marriage had taken him in overnight and the next day he had sought advice, enlisted in the Reserves and been sent to Newport.

The months that followed had been pleasant and busy, and he had succeeded for whole hours at a stretch in forgetting to be lonely. He had made many acquaintances but no firm friends. He didn't make friends readily, it seemed, although he was naturally affectionate and, now that he no longer had his father to chum with, would gladly have spent some of that pent-up affection on one of his fellows. But that experience on the night of the fourteenth of October had sobered him even more than he himself realized and possibly his quiet, silent ways unintentionally held others off. He had done well at the station, for he had more or less nautical knowledge to build on and was keen to observe and quick to learn. He had sought to specialize in gunnery, but owing to the crowded condition of the station at the time and to confusion resultant on constant changes in plans and methods he had made only slight progress when his transference to the coast Patrol Service came. He left the station with

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the rating of second-class seaman and with a good all-around knowledge of a seaman's duties.

As the time to report aboard the *Wanderer* drew near he found that, while he was impatient for duty again, existence aboard the patrol boat appealed but little to him. He set his wits to work in the endeavor to find some means of securing a transfer, but when the morning of his discharge from the hospital arrived he had failed so far to find any. The *Wanderer* was at Buzzard's Bay and he was to go there by train, arriving at four-twenty in the afternoon. Between New Bedford and Buzzard's Bay Fate stepped in and took a hand in his affairs.

The train was a leisurely one and stopped frequently. Nelson, hunched in the window end of a red velvet seat, with his canvas bag between his feet—that bag holding nearly all his worldly possessions until such time as the slow-moving arm of the Law, set in motion by Uncle Peter, had distributed his father's estate—looked out on the pleasant vistas of villages and harbors and open water warming in the May sunlight and felt, for some reason, rather pathetic. It was what he himself would have called "a corking day," and yet the very "corkingness" of it somehow depressed him. He was so busy feeling depressed

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that he scarcely noticed when, after leaving one of the small stations along the route, someone took the other half of his seat. Nelson merely drew into himself a bit more, kicked his bag a little further toward the window and went on being mournful. He didn't see that the newcomer observed him more than once with kindly interest and seemed inclined to open a conversation. He was a man of apparently fifty years, with a pair of very deep blue eyes behind shell-rimmed glasses, a closely-cropped gray mustache and a sun-tanned face. He sat very erect in his seat, a light overcoat, carefully folded, laid across the knees of his immaculate steel-gray trousers, and at intervals ran his gaze over a Boston morning paper which, however, failed to hold his attention for long at a time. It was he who finally commenced the conversation.

"Transferring?" he inquired.

Nelson looked around rather blankly. "Sir?"

The man smiled. "I asked if you were transferring. I see you have your bag with you."

"No, sir, I'm rejoining my boat at Buzzard's Bay."

The other nodded, darting a swift glance at the boy's cap ribbon. "*Wanderer*, eh? Patrol boat?"

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"Yes, sir." Nelson was, in turn, doing some looking, too, and there was something about his neighbor that suggested authority. Still it didn't do to talk too freely. They had been plentifully warned against that.

"Been on liberty?" pursued the man.

"No, sir. Hospital."

"Really? Nothing serious, I hope."

"No, sir." The gentleman looked expectant of further details, but Nelson said no more. After a moment the former asked: "Who's in command of the *Wanderer*?"

"Lieutenant Hattuck."

"Hattuck, eh?" He seemed trying to recall something. Finally: "Yes, yes, of course. I thought I knew the name. Commanded the *Andover* in '98. So he's in the Reserve, is he? How large is your boat, the *Wanderer*?"

"Not very big," answered Nelson, evasively. The other chuckled.

"You're right, my boy, not to talk too much. I forget that—Hm, let me see." He dipped into a pocket, drew forth a case and selected from it a card which he passed across. "Merely to reassure you," he explained. Nelson accepted the bit of engraved cardboard in surprise, a surprise which increased when he read the name on it, the

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name of a man high in the Naval affairs of the nation.

"Excuse me, sir, I didn't know——" began Nelson in some confusion.

"Naturally you wouldn't," laughed the other. "I'm not tagged, thank goodness! You see, I've been on liberty too," he added smiling, "but not, I am glad to say, in hospital. I've been visiting my family for a week. And now, like you, I'm going back to duty."

"Yes, sir," murmured Nelson. As the Navy man made no offer to take his card back the boy held it in his hand, wondering what to do with it. "I guess there's plenty to do in Washington just now, sir," he hazarded.

The other nodded. "A terrific amount of work, yes. I felt guilty most of the time I was away; maybe I enjoyed my vacation more for that reason," he added with his contagious chuckle. Nelson smiled in sympathy.

"It's like playing hookey, sir," he suggested.

"That's it. How do you like the Reserve service—er—by the way, what's your name?"

"Troy, sir. I like it very well, only—I'd rather be on the other side."

"I see. Yes, of course. Well, I dare say

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you'll get there in time. How long have you been serving?"

"Only about five months. I joined in November. I was at Newport until a month ago. Do you think, sir——"

"Well?" asked the man, encouragingly, as Nelson hesitated.

"Do you think I'd have stood a better chance to get across soon if I'd joined the Navy instead of the Reserves, sir?"

"I don't think that would have made much difference, Troy. You youngsters have to wait your turns, you know. We try to select men for the other side who have seen service, but we can't be too particular now, for there's a ship asking a complement every day or two and you new men are getting your chances fast. Navy enlistment has been slower than we hoped for so far, but I think it will pick up. Meanwhile you must console yourself with the knowledge that what you are doing along the coast is just as important as what our lads are doing in British waters. It's very necessary work, even if it isn't spectacular.

"Yes, sir, I suppose it is, only I want to learn gunnery, and there isn't much chance on our boat.

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I'm hoping that if I don't get across pretty soon I'll get transferred to the Atlantic Fleet."

"Gunnery, eh?" mused the other. "I see." He was silent a minute. Then: "Just write your name on the back of that card, will you?" he asked. "Here's a pencil. That's it, thanks. I'll tuck this away and perhaps I can do something for you before long. Now tell me," he went on as he slipped the card into a leather wallet, "about that little adventure you had a couple of weeks ago, for I take it that it was the *Wanderer* that brought in that German spy, Lieutenant—Haegel, isn't it?—and his cronies."

So Nelson told of the incident, and afterwards, led on by his sympathetic audience, told about everything else he knew! It was a veritable orgy of talk for Nelson, and later on, no longer under the spell of the other's personality, he wondered how he had ever come to do it! They parted at a junction soon after Nelson had completed an account of the attack on the *Jonas Clinton*, and his new acquaintance shook hands and said he hoped they would meet again and got off without further reference to that half promise. But Nelson rejoined the *Wanderer* in quite a hopeful frame of mind and in much better spirits than when he had left New Bedford. Of course, he

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reflected, it might be that nothing would come of that encounter, but there had been something about the Navy official suggesting that he had a good memory and that his half promise was as good as another man's written agreement.

CHAPTER VI

ON THE THAMES

THOSE on the *Wanderer* were all so glad to see him back, and showed it so positively, that he felt almost disloyal in wanting to leave the boat. Ensign Stowell, although he only returned Nelson's salute when the latter stepped aboard, later shook hands with him and enquired about the arm and was "so awfully decent," as Nelson called it to himself, that he found himself wishing that Fate would somehow fix it so that when his transfer came, if it did come, he would find himself still under the Ensign.

A week passed, and then another, and he began to think that, after all, he was destined to knock about Cape Cod in the *Wanderer* for the rest of the war. He had not mentioned the encounter with the Navy official to anyone, not even to Billy Masters, who would have heard it if anyone had. And as the days went by and it became more and more evident that nothing was to come

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of that meeting on the train, he was glad he had kept it to himself. He wondered whether the official had lost the card with the name scrawled on the back or whether he had just decided not to bother about the affair.

Meanwhile life on the *Wanderer* was by no means lacking in interest. They had been allowed, at last, sufficient ammunition for gun practice and this was held several times a week. Nelson was assigned to the after gun crew, under Lanky Staples, and in the course of the next few weeks obtained quite a little instruction and experience. Lanky had a fine contempt for the toy, as he called the three-pounder, but managed to make some creditable hits with it. Nelson bought a book on ordnance and ammunition and studied it in his leisure time, determined that sooner or later he would qualify as gunner's mate. He got practice in sighting and loading and showed enough promise to cause Cochran to take him under his wing and teach him a good deal of practical gunnery, which was the only kind the gunner's mate knew.

The *Wanderer* flitted up and down the coast in fair weather and foul, although there was not much of the latter that Spring, and had her moments of interest. There was a submarine scare

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early in June and one breezy morning the patrol boat went dashing off to the south, quite hopefully, in obedience to orders. But the rumored sub didn't materialize and they ran into a heavy sea and broke a propeller shaft and had to wallow into New London for repairs. It was a three-day job to install a new shaft and Nelson and Billy Masters went sight-seeing on various occasions and found quite a lot to interest them. Some four hundred reserves from the Newport station had recently been dumped down on a New London pier and were using it as barracks, and they discovered several acquaintances amongst them and had a rather good time. They attended a dance at the hotel one evening—although Nelson didn't dance, went over a mine layer, shopped along State street and visited the submarine base up at the old Navy Yard.

The latter excursion happened in an odd way. Nelson and Billy were admiring some perfectly gorgeous strawberry-pink and Nile-green shirts in a haberdasher's window one afternoon when they heard someone say:

"I'll buy you a dozen of those if you'll put them on." The speaker was a chap in sailor's togs whose cap ribbon bore the legend "U. S. Submarine Base." He was a good looking fellow,

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about two years Nelson's senior, slim, sun-browned and merry, and Nelson took to him on the instant. But it was Billy who answered; Billy always had an answer ready.

"Sure, I'll put 'em on," he said. "I'll take the pink ones."

"Right-o! Me for you, son! Come on in and pick them out."

But Billy declined to carry his bluff any further. "Tell you what I will do, though," he hedged. "I'll take 'em now and wear 'em the day we march into Berlin!"

"Nothing doing, old man. I want to live to see it. What's the *Wanderer*? Mine-layer?"

"No, coast patrol," answered Billy. "We bust a shaft the other day chasing a U-boat and are in for repairs."

"Chasing a U-boat? Sounds exciting. Catch her?"

"We would have, but she wasn't there," replied Billy gravely. "Are you up at the submarine base? Do they allow folks in there?"

"Yes. And they don't. But if you want to look us over I'll fix it for you. What are you doing now? Want to run up and see us? I'll give you transportation." He nodded at a vividly blue roadster automobile at the curb. "That's

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my boat, and if you don't mind squeezing a bit——”

“Phew!” exclaimed Billy. “Do they supply you with those dinguses? Guess I'll transfer to the submarine branch and get me one.”

The car was a handsome affair of a world-famous foreign make. Their new acquaintance laughed.

“No, I had that and brought it with me. We're about three miles from town and it's a long way to walk. What do you say? Want to take a ride?”

“Surest thing you know,” agreed Billy. “Who gets in first?”

“I do. One of you can sit on the seat and the other on the floor. Don't drag your feet, though, it tears up the road. All right? Here we go then.”

The blue car chugged demurely enough down the street, and took its place with a dozen other vehicles before the ferry slip. The driver shut off the engine, since the boat was only just entering, and turned to Nelson, who was in the seat, while Billy sat on the floor, with his knees hunched under his chin, and observed the world with a cheerful grin. “How long have you been this way?” asked the owner of the car.

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"What way?" inquired Nelson.

"Oh, you can talk?" laughed the other. "I thought you were dumb. I wondered if you were born that way or if it was just shell-shock! Where's your ship?"

Nelson pointed across to the yard. "On the ways over there. I don't have to talk when Masters is around. Have you been at the submarine base long?"

"No, only about two months. If I stay two months more I'll be gray-headed. It's a hard life." But he smiled as he said it, and Nelson took the statement with a grain of salt.

"Have you ever been submerged?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, they send us down every little while. Maybe they're hoping we won't come up again, but we always do. So far," he added as an afterthought and with a grin.

"Do you like it? The submarine service, I mean."

"First rate. It's mighty interesting and the fellows are corkers; officers, too—most of them. I'd like to see some service, though, before the war's over. They say they're likely to keep us up here six or eight months. Think the war will last that long?"

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"I think it will last several years yet," replied Nelson soberly.

"Good!" exclaimed the other, starting his engine again as the procession of vehicles moved toward the now empty boat. "No, I didn't mean that, of course," he corrected when they were on board. "But I certainly do want a crack at the Huns before it's over. Want to get out and go forward?"

Nelson elected to remain where he was, but Billy murmured something and strolled off toward the bow.

"So do I," said Nelson, taking up the conversation again. "I want to get across as soon as I can. I suppose it's pretty hard to get into the submarine school, isn't it?"

"Yes, rather. I was in the Naval Militia, but I dropped out and enlisted in the Navy and applied for the submarine branch. Somehow, I got it. Most of the fellows are service men, though."

Billy moseyed back and perched himself on the floorboards again and the blue car rattled across the gang-plank, charged up-hill in the wake of its fellows, turned abruptly to the left and dashed off in a cloud of dust. There wasn't much conversation on the way up to the base, for the driver

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had his hands full keeping the lurching car to the road and his guests were very busy holding themselves in. But they did exchange names. And soon after that Martin Townsend—for that, it developed, was the car owner's name—turned the automobile into a field and jumped out.

"How do you like my garage?" he inquired laughingly.

"You don't mean it lives out here?" exclaimed Nelson. The other nodded.

"Surest thing you know. They aren't very much interested in our autos. I notice, though, that the officers are mighty glad to borrow them when they want to get to town, or to beg a ride. Say, I've gone into New London with eight in that old boat! Had them clinging on to every part except the wheels! Come on down and I'll see if I can get you through."

They were halted by a guard, but Townsend was haughty and insistent and they were finally allowed to enter the gate. There wasn't much that was imposing about the submarine base, but they found it interesting. Townsend took them into the barracks, introduced them to several fellows and then led the way down to the boats. There were only four submarines tied up at the stone dock that afternoon and their guide ex-

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plained that the others were cruising or doing submerging stunts down the river. They were shown over one of the craft and Billy, who, to use his own words, had never seen one of the contraptions close up, was visibly impressed and asked so many questions that Townsend began to look distressed and Nelson dragged his friend back to the dock. Townsend apologized for not taking them back to the ferry in his car, but he had used up his day's liberty, and so, shaking hands cordially, the boys took leave and climbed into a decrepit "jitney" that had just unloaded three young officers at the gate. Townsend waved them a gay farewell, a straight, lithe form against the sunset glow, and was lost to sight. Nelson was sorry to leave him, for he had taken an unusual fancy to the chap, and he hoped that they would meet again.

They rattled back through a golden haze of dust, dodging other cars by a series of miracles, and reached the *Wanderer* barely in time to escape a reprimand. They saw Martin Townsend once more before the *Wanderer* weighed anchor. It was the following morning. Nelson, Billy and Lanky Staples were leaning over the rail after breakfast when there came a swishing sound from the other side of the boat and they looked across

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the cabin roof. The sound came from a submarine running down-river on the surface. She passed close to the *Wanderer* and the two officers on the conning tower saluted Lieutenant Hattuck, while the half dozen men standing or walking about the narrow deck waved across. One of them was Townsend, looking much less trim today in a soiled dungaree. He put his hands to his mouth and said something, but Nelson couldn't get the message, and, under the sharp eyes of the officers, Townsend didn't dare repeat it. In a moment the submarine had slipped stealthily past and, with a final wave of his hand, Townsend vanished as the superstructure hid him from view. That, thought Nelson regretfully, was probably the last time he would ever see the fellow. But Fortune plays odd pranks, and, although Nelson couldn't know it then, he was destined to meet Martin Townsend again before long and under strange circumstances.

The *Wanderer* left New London that afternoon and dropped anchor in New Bedford just before supper time. Ensign Stowell went ashore and came back about nine with mail and newspapers. The arrival of mail was a matter of slight interest to Nelson, since letters seldom came his way. It always made him feel a little lonesome

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and neglected to watch the others tear open envelopes and hear them read bits of home news, and tonight he left the forecastle to its pleasant diversion and went up on deck. The watch was on duty at the bow, while aft Lieutenant Hattuck and his junior were pacing up and down in conversation. Nelson leaned against the wheel house and watched the lights of the town, and presently bits of the officers' talk came to him along the deck, for the June night was calm, with scarce a breath of wind blowing, and the harbor was quiet.

"Well, I see 'Black Jack's' reached the other side," said the captain.

"Yes, the London dispatches make quite a lot of it."

"It's epochal, Jack. Look at it. An American general and his staff welcomed in England, cheered on the dock and along the street, if the paper speaks true, received like a conqueror——"

The voices died away. Then: "I'm glad it's Pershing," the ensign was saying as the couple neared the listener again. "They'll like him, the English. He's quiet, unassuming, business-like, just the man for the job."

"Hope they give him a free hand over there."

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He will be too far from home to succeed if they nag him. What I'd like to know——”

So it was General Pershing who had arrived in England, thought Nelson. He tried to picture the event, thrilling a little with pride as he did so. The lieutenant was right: it *was* epochal. All sorts of epoch-making events were happening now-adays, and would happen. It was rumored that a big army was to follow the commander across within the month. Think of an American army in France! The Stars-and-Stripes waving over her trampled, blood-stained battle-fields! It was wonderful and glorious; and it made him feel more out of it than ever. While such great things were happening he was scrubbing decks and polishing bright-work and greasing toy guns on a converted motor boat along Cape Cod! It was unbearable!

He had been so busy with his thoughts that he had not heard the officers' talk for several moments when he was suddenly aroused by the sound of his own name. It was the lieutenant who spoke it and Nelson caught only the tag end of the sentence:

“—— Troy. Have him report to me in the morning.”

“I will,” said the other. “I'm glad for his

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sake. He's been wanting badly to get across. I told you about his father, didn't I?"

"Yes. Too bad. Thinks he's still living, you said. Not much chance, I'd say. Still——"

Nelson's heart thumped wildly. It had come at last! He wondered where they were sending him and would have given a good deal to have been able to ask just then. But it wouldn't do. He must wait until morning. He was going across; the ensign had said as much; and that was the main thing! It didn't matter a bit what the ship was so long as it sailed for France or England. He felt sorry for the others then: Lanky, whose one ambition was to serve a fourteen-inch gun; Ensign Stowell, too, and Billy, and all the rest. They would still be kicking their heels aboard the *Wanderer* back home while he, Nelson, was in the thick of it. Then he wondered if he had heard aright. Perhaps, after all, he had been mistaken. He listened as the officers paced back toward him, but now they were talking of other things. After awhile he went below and laid down in his bunk and was alternately happy and depressed until he finally fell into what was to prove his last sleep aboard the *Wanderer*.

CHAPTER VII

THE U. S. S. "GYANDOTTE"

WHAT'S the land over there?" asked Nelson, nodding westward toward the low, faint line of shore.

"North Carolina," replied the tall youth whose sleeve bore the crossed quills of a yeoman. "That's Cape Hatteras, further along."

Nelson craned his neck. The shore-line stretched out as though to meet them, a distant angle of sand-reefs, slightly more distinct than the land abeam.

"Is it?" he asked interestedly. "I've heard of Hatteras."

"You're in luck only to have heard of it," grumbled the other. "Mostly you feel it! We're getting into it now. This is the roughest stretch between Cape Cod and the Florida Keys. You want to try it when there's a good off-shore gale if you want some real fun! This your first voyage?"

"My first in the Navy, except knocking around for a month or so on a patrol boat up north. I've

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never been south before. I suppose you've been in the service a long time."

"Three years," answered the yeoman nonchalantly yet proudly. "This is my fourth ship. I was on the old *Missouri* first. Then the *Montana*, and after that the *Tacoma*. Now it's this old tub."

"Oh, is the *Gyandotte* a tub?" asked Nelson with a smile.

"Sure she is. She's sixteen years old and was out of commission until the war started. They've tinkered her up so she'll hold together for a year or so, maybe. They say she's got new engines, but I don't know if it's so. Reckon the Old Man's keeping her close to shore in case she falls apart."

Nelson looked through the port and across the leagues of tumbling muddy-gray water. "At that it would be a long swim," he said with a smile. "Do you know where we're going?"

The yeoman nodded above his folded arms. "Bahamas and around there. Anyway, that's what I heard. The papers had a piece about a German raider off Great Abaco last week and I reckon we're sent down to have a look-see. But, shucks, there isn't a German ship this side of the Azores, unless it's a sub that's missed her way. We'll go down there and cruise around for a

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month without getting foot on shore and then waddle home again and go into dry dock for repairs. It's sure punk luck, getting stuck on this old spile-driver."

"You don't think, then, that they'll send the *Gyandotte* across to the other side?"

"Her? She couldn't do it, not unless they towed her," was the contemptuous reply. "If you wanted to get across you'd better have stuck to your patrol boat. They're sending those over all the time. Well, I've got to be stirring."

The youth sighed and moved off along the spotless deck, his wide trousers flapping around his long, thin shanks. Left to himself Nelson watched the far, thin, low-lying streak of sand that was Cape Hatteras and wondered if what the yeoman had told him as to the ship's destination was true. It was nearly a week since he had said good-by to the *Wanderer* and taken train for Norfolk. There he had reported at the Navy Yard, according to orders, and been assigned to the third class cruiser *Gyandotte*, at the time loading supplies and taking on the final coat of gray war paint. The *Gyandotte*, after the *Wanderer*, had seemed a truly majestic ship and that she was headed straight for France or England had seemed quite within the probabilities, until Nel-

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son had mentioned the idea to others. After that his hopes had dwindled, for his notion produced laughter or sarcasm. He was assured that when the *Gyandotte* saw the coast of France the bilge-pump would be spouting gold dollars. And now this other fellow, he of the crossed quills and long legs, had corroborated previous pronouncements. It was rather discouraging, thought Nelson.

The cruiser was behaving very flippantly now, rolling and pitching at a great rate, and he had to steady himself to keep on his feet. The *Gyandotte* was only a little over three thousand tonnage and was, as the yeoman had said, an old ship. Her length was 305 feet. She was schooner rigged, with two very tall funnels. For armament she carried ten five-inch breech-loading rifles and six six-pounder rapid fire guns. She had been credited with something under seventeen knots when built, but there was a rumor current about the ship today that she had been newly equipped with "kettles" that could drive her close to twenty. Nelson was one of several hundred capable-looking young men in blue flannel who had been gathered from many sources. Some, like Nelson himself, were green hands, and some few were Reserves, but most had seen more or less service on other ships. Nelson had been assigned to the port

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watch and to the crew of Number Four gun of the main battery as second shellman. That was interesting, although after the first drill his arms ached from lifting the shells, and had the little *Gyandotte* been headed across the Atlantic instead of southward along the coast he would have been more than contented.

They had steamed out of Norfolk early that morning in a heavy rain and a flat green sea. Now, mid-afternoon, the rain had ceased and the sea was no longer flat nor green. It was decidedly boisterous and looked heavy with sand. Mist had taken the place of rain, a mist almost too fine to be seen but which lay in globules and little pools on every flat surface. There was a softness in the air that was new to Nelson, a mildness that seemed to presage the southern latitudes toward which the little gray cruiser was plowing her way.

So far, in spite of the fact that he had been aboard three days, Nelson had made few acquaintances and no friends. This, however, need not be wondered at, for it was almost equally true of all others on the ship. It requires more than three days for officers and men to find themselves and to get shaken down. The process of evolving order out of the confusion resultant on gathering

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several hundred men of all branches together on a ship quite new to them is a slow one. The process begins at once and moves steadily, but a deal of training and instruction is necessary, and the machinery of a modern warship is complex indeed. Officers must learn to know each other and their men, and the men, in the same way, must learn to know their officers and each other. Every soul on board has a particular and personal duty, or set of duties, to perform. When a member of the crew goes aboard he receives his station billet which tells him his rating, his watch number, his part of the ship, his mess, his boat and his station at quarters and fire quarters. He finds himself immediately under the authority of a leader who is, in turn, subordinate to a higher authority. A battleship has six departments: Gunnery, Navigation, Engineering, Construction, Medical and Pay. These, in turn, are subdivided into seventeen divisions, as, in the Engineering Department, Main Engines Division, Boilers Division and Auxiliaries Division. Each division is a government itself responsible to the Executive Officer.

Smaller ships follow the same plan of organization, but have fewer divisions, the chief difference being in the Gunnery Department owing to fewer guns and, frequently, absence of torpedo

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tubes. The ship is divided into sections from bow to stern, sometimes by bulkheads and sometimes by imaginary lines, and each section includes all space between keel and main deck, or the top of gun turrets above the main deck. These sections correspond in number to the gun divisions of the main battery and each is in charge of the senior officer of that gun division, who is responsible for the cleanliness, orderliness and upkeep of his section. A certain number of men of the proper ratings are assigned to each of the divisions. As nearly as possible the men of a division are kept together in the ship's routine and as close to their battle stations as may be practicable. Each division is divided into four sections for duties, for keeping watch and for liberty, which is navy parlance for shore leave.

Perfect discipline is the foundation upon which the organization is built, and the recruit must learn discipline and subordination to authority first of all. But he must learn those things without losing his self-reliance, for he will be constantly called on to act on his own responsibility. He is one of hundreds of other units. These units are formed into small groups under a subleader. The small groups are again formed into larger groups under other subleaders. The larger groups in turn

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form the whole, and above the whole stands the captain. Each man must know not only his own particular specialty, whether that of seaman, gunnery expert, boiler maker, carpenter, mess attendant or stoker, but must learn to so coöperate with his fellow workers that the many separate units will be welded into one coördinating whole. The ship must be navigated and controlled, the guns kept in condition and fired, the engines and boilers operated, all parts of the ship kept in repair, the officers and men fed, and a dozen other duties performed, and all these activities must be so unified that they will come under the control of one mind, that of the captain.

Drills form a large part of the instruction method and are provided to prepare the officers and men for any emergency. They include battle drills such as Strip Ship, General Quarters and Torpedo Defense Quarters, emergency drills such as Fire, Collision, Abandon Ship and Watertight Integrity, and gun drills. There are, besides these, the ship manuals, guard mounting, general muster and inspection. There was on the *Gyandotte*, however, no need for the Strip Ship drill, for everything not necessary in war time had been removed at the navy yard before sailing; wooden doors and lockers, unnecessary boats, spars,

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booms, ladders, davits, stanchions, ventilators and inflammables. In short, everything not absolutely needed for the moderate comfort of the personnel and the conduct of war had been left behind. In battle, articles of wood, whether fixtures or furnishings, have an unpleasant way of splintering under shell fire and, besides, may become ignited. Prior to an actual engagement the call of Clear Ship for Action frequently consigns still other things to a watery grave.

Nelson stood first watch that night and turned into his hammock at midnight. The *Gyandotte* was riding on a more even keel now and the sway of his swinging bed was only enough to help him pass quickly into a sound slumber.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RAIDER

TWO days later, in sight of Mariguana Island, they found the Chilian bark *San Felipe*, or what was left of her. She had a cargo of rough lumber aboard and although little remained above-deck the hulk was still afloat. Shell fire had carried away masts and deck houses and left gaping wounds in the hull. The *Gyandotte* sent an officer aboard and the latter speedily returned with the word that the attack, from the evidence found, had taken place not over twenty-four hours before. The ship was deserted and all valuables had been removed. That the deed had been done by the German raider previously reported was the belief of officers and men, and what had looked before like a wild-goose chase suddenly assumed importance. Spirits arose on the cruiser and for the rest of that day, while she ran southward, every man off duty elected himself lookout. But finding the raider, about whom little was known, was a difficult task. They passed a

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British gunboat just before evening and exchanged signals, with the result that the *Gyandotte* turned groaningly back and steamed northward again. Several times smoke was sighted, but each chase only raised a friendly ship. The next morning the *Gyandotte* was out of sight of anything that even suggested land and doing her best clip, which proved to be nineteen and a half knots. At noon that day the radio man picked up cheering news which was posted on the bulletin:

“United States torpedo boat *Benton* sighted a ship believed to be an enemy raider at five-thirty o'clock yesterday evening and fired eight shots but was unable to hit owing to extreme range. The enemy refused battle and made her escape at about eighteen knots.”

“They might tell us where,” grumbled a young gunner's mate of Nelson's watch. “For all that says it might have been up around Newfoundland!”

But there was a general feeling throughout the ship that the *Benton's* encounter with the raider had been rather nearer at hand than that and that somewhere this side of Bermuda, toward which the cruiser was scouting, there would be something doing. Foretop and maintop lookout kept a sharp watch that day, but night closed down over a

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tumbling sea without reward. In the wireless house the blue sparks sizzled and spat busily, and rumors flew about above deck and below incessantly. But Nelson, like many others, turned in that night a prey to disappointment.

It was shortly before six bells the next forenoon that the welcome, long-deferred and exciting news went the rounds that the foretop lookout had sighted smoke. All hands who might crowded forward, but from the deck nothing was as yet to be seen. It was well over an hour later when the quarry raised above the horizon sufficiently to be visible to the crew. Then began a long, hard chase. The *Gyandotte's* boilers roared as never before in that ship's sixteen years of existence and black smoke belched from her two high funnels and poured off to port. But after a short while it became evident that the enemy, if she was the enemy, which there was no reason to doubt, was making nearly if not quite as good speed. By the middle of the afternoon it was apparent that there was no hope of overtaking the raider before dark, if ever, for the *Gyandotte's* best effort had gained only a few miles in the six hours that had elapsed since sighting the quarry. There were grumbles and mutters uncomplimentary to the *Gyandotte* amongst the men, and it is not to be doubted that

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the officers, too, sighed for something speedier underfoot than the little cruiser. Night came down quickly, far too quickly to please those on the pursuer, and the distant shape of the raider faded from vision. That, since she was plainly refusing battle, she would seek to escape under cover of darkness by altering her course was a foregone conclusion, and it is fair to assume that there were many anxious discussions in the ward room that evening.

All night the *Gyandotte* plunged ahead at nearly twenty-one miles an hour. The noise of the engines and the plunging of the ship made sleep more than difficult for Nelson. Then, too, he was in a condition of excitement and suspense that sent his thoughts racing toward the morrow and kept his brain hard at work. And yet he did sleep, just as, if one was to judge from certain sounds that came from nearby hammocks, did others, and didn't awake until reveille sent him tumbling out to restore his canvas couch to its lashings and make his hasty toilet. He didn't have to ask any questions, for the news was hurrying from man to man that the German was still in sight and that the cruiser had cut down the lead considerably. If the *Gyandotte* had felt hurt the day before by the aspersions cast on her she must have been almost

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if not quite placated this morning, for they called her "some little hiker" and "a bulldog for grit" and approved her heartily.

It was ten when they got their first good look at the enemy. She was then some ten miles distant, presenting only a stern view, but with glasses it was possible to form some idea of her. She appeared slightly larger than the *Gyandotte*, with a good deal to be seen above-deck, the latter fact suggesting that she was a converted craft of some sort, possibly a small, fast merchantman. At two bells in the afternoon watch, just after mess, the shrill sound of the boatswain's pipe was heard commanding "Clear ship for action!" and all hands sprang to the work of stowing loose gear, connecting fire hose, rigging life lines and performing the almost numberless duties called for. Galley fires were hauled, lunch served out, ammunition supplied, dressing stations rigged, circuits tested and blast screens rigged. In a short time the cruiser was in fighting trim, the men had washed and shifted into clean underclothes and the battle ensigns were flying at the mastheads. The crew of Number Four gun hovered impatiently about the platform, one of them at least suffering inconvenience with his heart which showed an annoying disposition to travel back and

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forth between its usual location and his throat, or to seem to!

Shortly after two o'clock the enemy began the action at a hopeless range. The shell fell far short of its mark, although the direction was good. The challenge was answered on the *Gyandotte* by the bugle call of General Quarters and the men hurried to stations. A second shell from the German raider fell short and was followed quickly by a third which flung up the water close aboard. Not until then did the *Gyandotte* reply. Her bow guns spoke, but there were no hits. The enemy was evidently more desirous of running away than giving battle, for her firing was desultory and inaccurate for the succeeding quarter of an hour, during which the pursuer fired seldom and with no effect. At about eight thousand yards the real music began. It was then about two-thirty-five and the cruiser was approximately one hundred and twenty miles southwest of Bermuda. To the enemy went first blood, for a shell burst on deck forward of the bridge, carrying away part of that structure and damaging the foremast range finder. But after that it was the *Gyandotte's* battle. The enemy's after deck was raked clean five minutes after the main action started and she was repeatedly hulled during the ensuing fifty minutes.



There was a crash as the shell sped from the gun.

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effort, mechanically lifting and handing the heavy shells as though he were only a cog in a machine. His arms and back and legs ached, but he didn't know it then. His thoughts went back often to that midnight of the fourteenth of last October and when they did the lines of his face set more grimly.

The *Gyandotte* didn't escape unscathed, for the enemy scored seven hits during the battle. One of the cruiser's guns was early put out of action and a shell bored its way into a coal bunker and caused devastation below decks. That the *Gyandotte* presented only her bow to the enemy saved her from worse treatment. Less than an hour after the action had begun, the enemy ship signaled surrender. She was then in a sinking condition, with her starboard rail well under water. Firing ceased at three minutes past four and the *Gyandotte*, her men waving and cheering, steamed slowly toward the defeated enemy and began to lower her boats.

CHAPTER IX

OFF FOR THE OTHER SIDE

THE captured steamship proved to be the *Mahlow*, before the war a French passenger ship plying between Marseilles and Spanish ports under the name of the *Golfe du Lion*. She was of some thirty-seven hundred tons. She had been armed with small caliber guns in profusion, for her main deck fairly bristled with them and a multiplicity of ports had been cut on the lower deck. The latter were not apparent when closed, and, as the deck guns were easily hidden, she doubtless looked quite harmless when posing as a merchantman. She was credited by Lloyds with being a fast ship, and her inability to get away from the *Gyandotte* was later explained by her engineer force as due to poor coal taken aboard at a South American port. She had been at sea two months and had in that time caused considerable havoc from Rio de Janeiro north to the Caribbean. When taken she had on board twenty-six men of the crews of the *San*

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Felipe and a second vessel, both destroyed within the past three weeks. These men, however, seemed scarcely more pleased to reach the deck of the *Gyandotte* than did the bulk of the German sailors. About half of the *Mahlow's* complement was taken aboard the cruiser and the rest was taken care of by the United States gunboat *Hastings*, which appeared shortly after the surrender. The *Hastings'* men were a disgruntled lot, for the tiny gunboat had nearly ripped her seams for six hours in an effort to get to the scene. The *Mahlow* had twenty-two dead and a score injured, while aboard her adversary eight had been killed and nine wounded. Of the dead five were of the crew of Number One gun and the rest were of the engineering force. Among the *Mahlow's* wounded was her executive officer, a young junior lieutenant, who later died in hospital. What happened to the other prisoners Nelson never learned. The last he saw of them was at Norfolk two days later when they were marched away under a guard of marines.

The *Mahlow* was hopelessly battered and sank about six o'clock, rolling over like a dead whale just before she went under. Her officers looked on unemotionally from the decks of the two enemy ships, seeming to those who watched them more

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relieved than sorry to see the last of the raider. To Nelson fell the duty of guarding a squad of the prisoners the next day. The men were herded in two lots on the lower deck and the officers occupied fairly comfortable quarters aft. Many of the prisoners had been supplied with clothing, for when taken aboard they were in some cases in tatters. Nelson found that nearly half of the German sailors spoke English enough to be understood. To him they seemed a rather childish lot, more concerned with the rations dealt to them than with their recent misfortunes or their ultimate fate. There were exceptions, however, notably one dark-visaged man who wore the insignia of a machinist's mate. This man refused to eat any food for the first twenty-four hours and spent his time reviling his captors and, or so it appeared, his companions. The latter seemed in fear of him, but the fact didn't keep them from grinning at him behind his back.

The ship's doctor and assistants were busy all the way across to Norfolk, for some of the wounds sustained by the injured men of the German ship were serious. The bodies of the dead aboard the *Mahlow* had gone down with the ship, but on stretchers, under sheets of sailcloth the *Gyandotte's* dead went back to their own country for

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burial. Nelson couldn't help reflecting that the shell that had wrecked Number One gun might just as easily have chosen Number Four, in which case it was probable that he would have been lying quiet under a tarpaulin or groaning in the sick bay at this moment. But he didn't let his thoughts dwell overmuch on that subject. Life was a thing one risked when one joined the country's forces in time of war, and whether one was to die or come safely through was up to the Great Commander.

At Norfolk the *Gyandotte* underwent repairs and lay in the harbor four days with steam up. Liberty was granted the second day, but not after, and life aboard threatened to grow monotonous in spite of drills and duties. The newspapers made all they could of the action off Bermuda, but, as the Navy Department had given out but the barest facts, there was little to build a story on. Nelson made friends of a sort and picked up all the information and lore obtainable on the subject of guns, ammunition, explosives and fire control. Garey, gun captain of Number Four, was the chief victim of Nelson's passion for knowledge, and Garey, who wore two service stripes and the Navy "E," and who was an untalkative chap ordinarily, spent hours at various times on the

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boy's enlightenment. Nelson soon had a large fund of information on many subjects concerned with gunnery. He learned the why and wherefore of gas check pads and rings, and how to seat them, learned how to clear powder chamber and mushroom head of oil before firing, how to sponge and re-oil after, learned that anyone using emery or brick dust on certain parts was inherently a criminal who would murder his poor old blind grandmother, learned how to find leaks in the recoil cylinders and how to refill them and much more severely practical information, some of which he had known and forgotten and much of which was new to him.

He dipped into the subject of explosives, which he found intensely interesting, and borrowed a book about them from the ship's library and, I suspect, made rather a nuisance of himself during those four days at anchor and for several days after.

Norfolk was a busy scene just then and scarcely a day passed that didn't witness the arrival or departure of one or more warships. There were submarines there, too, and Nelson often wondered if Martin Townsend was aboard one of them. On the morning of the fourth day of the *Gyandotte's* stay there was much activity in the subma-

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rine basin, followed just before noon by a wholesale exodus of the little underwater craft. They went sliding past the cruiser on their way out to sea, one after another, until Nelson had counted eight of them. Somehow and somewhere the rumor started that they were going across under their own steam, which rumor, whether true or not, aroused much enthusiasm on the *Gyandotte*, and as the subs filed past they were roundly cheered.

That same afternoon the *Gyandotte*, too, up-anchored and stood out past Fortress Monroe and Cape Charles and set her course northeastward. There was a heavy rain falling and the lights ashore twinkled wanly as the cruiser crossed the mouth of the bay. Nelson spent a wet watch on deck between midnight and four in the morning, and was heartily glad to throw off his glistening rubber clothing and turn in at eight bells. In the morning the *Gyandotte* was steaming at half-speed, out of sight of land, at the tail-end of a one column formation of cruisers and destroyers that reached ahead until lost in the gray murk. It was a miserable, cheerless sort of morning, and even "chow" with all the hot coffee he could drink didn't dispel the gloom. But something else did shortly after, for there appeared on the

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ship's bulletin the soul-stirring announcement that the *Gyandotte* was to convoy submarines to an American base in British waters!

There was joy, loud and unrestrained, on the cruiser. Nelson forgot lowering skies, unfriendly sea and reeking decks and wanted to cheer or dance—or both. There was only one fly in the ointment, and that was indicated by Ferris, the lanky third class yeoman who had been one of Nelson's first acquaintances on board.

"It'll be a rotten voyage," said Ferris mournfully. "Those subs are old tubs that can't stand any weather and we'll be waiting on them hand and foot all the way. Likely as not we'll have to tow them! It'll take us about two weeks to get over, you mark my words, Troy. And if we don't lose two or three of them on the way it'll be a miracle."

But Nelson wasn't to be downcast by any such talk as that. He had long since decided that Ferris was a natural-born pessimist, anyway. And, besides, Nelson wasn't particular how long the voyage lasted just so long as it led them to the other side. What did worry him slightly was the question of whether the *Gyandotte*, which, after all, was a third class cruiser and, even for her class, not especially efficient as a warship, was

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to remain on the other side or come home again. If, he decided, she was to do the latter, and he learned of it in time, he would do all in his power short of actually deserting, to remain behind. However, there was no sense in crossing a bridge before you came to it, and meanwhile he was in high spirits.

The weather got thick toward noon and the half-speed became less than half and the bow lookouts had their work cut out for them, for there is always danger of treading on the heels of the ship ahead of you in a heavy fog. Nothing of the sort happened, however, and somewhere that night they picked up their charges. When it was Nelson didn't know, for he was asleep at the time, but when he looked out the next morning there they were, fourteen of the little steel cylinders, bobbing along with the spray drenching their canvas-protected bridges and the waves breaking along the decks. They were a plucky lot, Nelson decided, and he told himself that he wasn't half sorry to be where he was instead of in one of those tiny "tin cigars." But, nevertheless, he found that down at the bottom of his heart was a sort of sneaking desire to see what it was like to eat and sleep and have his being in one of the strange craft. There were

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all kinds in sight, single hull and combination, coastal and fleet, large and small. Indeed, one tiny Class H boat, which was wallowing along within a short distance of the *Gyandotte*, looked to be scarcely more than a toy and appeared to have set forth on a most suicidal venture. Further ahead were larger boats, submarines of possibly a thousand or twelve hundred tons displacement with sterns queerly cut away and much superstructure. In the gray of the morning it was difficult to pick them out a half mile away so closely did their hulls match the hue of sky and water. They were in two column formation, well spaced, and the leaders were far away from the *Gyandotte*, their presence indicated now and then by a dash of white foam when a wave broke against a conning tower. The convoyers consisted of three cruisers, the *Gyandotte* amongst them, a heavy looking, high-decked ship which someone said was a submarine tender and two destroyers of about four hundred tons, themselves looking scarcely more seaworthy than their charges. All that day the flotilla steamed northeastward and all of the next, the weather remaining either drizzly or foggy. Some time in the early morning of the fourth day after leaving Norfolk the light

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on Cape Sable shone off to port and in the afternoon they put in to Halifax.

That was rather fun, for they received a fine reception from the warships and merchantmen lying in the outer harbor and, later, ashore, were welcomed quite as cordially. There was liberty every day during the four days the ships lay there, and Nelson, sometimes with shipmates and sometimes alone, saw about all there was to be seen of the old city which, in the month of July, fortunately unaware of the destruction and death that was to be her portion a few months later, was bright and cheerful in spite of all the war activities within and about her. The *Gyandotte* took on coal one day and Nelson had his first experience of the joys of such a job. After the bunkers were filled, the coal being handled aboard the *Gyandotte* in bags by hand, every speck of coal dust had to be washed away, and that was a task almost as difficult as loading. But at last the job was done, though the *Gyandotte's* men didn't threaten the Navy record that time, and soiled dungarees were pulled off and baths were in order. For the first time Nelson realized the advisability of winning speedy promotion, for petty officers didn't have to carry bags of coal across a canvas covered deck.

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They were to have started on again after three days at Halifax, but one of the submarines had managed to get an engine out of commission and repairs required another day, so that it was just after sunset on the fourth evening that underwater craft and convoys pulled up hooks and turned noses seaward again. British and French flags dipped as they passed out of the harbor and from one of the warships came the strains of the American anthem, in response to which the departing Jackies cheered and waved. Devil's Island Light blinked farewell to them and they steamed away into the ocean lane, one more contribution to the cause of Justice and Humanity.

CHAPTER X

OVERBOARD

SOME twenty-five hundred miles lay before them, which meant from five to six days at sea, depending on weather and other fortunes. On the *Gyandotte* it was pretty unanimously the opinion that the submarines had tackled a "man's job," and that those aboard them were "regular fellows." For the first two days it was customary to ask of a morning: "Have we still got 'em all?" But the subs themselves appeared to neither ask nor expect sympathy. They went at their task with a fine nonchalance, plowing along sturdily and steadily at some twelve knots an hour, sometimes hidden from sight beyond the seas that tumbled them, always dripping from end to end. The bridges invariably held one or more rubber-clad forms swaying up and down, back and forth, behind the scant protection of the canvas weather shields. It was a gallant little band, and those on the larger ships were proud of them and, while never losing a

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chance to make fun of them, would have fought on the instant had anyone so much as hinted that those submarine officers and men weren't the pluckiest chaps in the service.

The usual fog met them off the Banks and the summer weather that had accompanied them up the coast gave place to chill days and chillier nights. On the morning of the third day at sea the fog blew away before a strong northeast wind and they had stormy sunlight until well toward evening. By that time there was talk of dirty weather ahead, and the prediction was verified before midnight. At six bells the *Gyandotte* was plunging and shaking, while a freshening gale threw whole seas aboard her and seemed to be trying to blow her back where she had come from. The cruiser made hard going of it, showing a nasty disposition to stick her nose under the seas rather than through them. Everything was afloat forward of amidships. Word came presently from the flagship to reduce speed to ten knots, and later it was still further reduced. There was much anxiety as to the submarines and in the *Gyandotte's* forecastle many a head was shaken commiseratingly that night. The gale increased rather than lessened toward morning and when daylight came it showed a world of mountainous

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seas and leaden sky. But it also showed fourteen submarines still in sight, although badly out of position. At least, so Nelson was told. Personally he could see but one or two from the *Gyandotte*, and those only occasionally. Watching the nearer one, a half-mile off the port bow, he shuddered as the tiny gray thing pitched and tossed and rolled and he tried to think what life inside her must be at such a time. And yet that furtive desire still lurked at the back of his consciousness, the desire to cast his lot with those heroic lads. Toward evening, though, the wish was less well defined, for Nelson discovered to his surprised dismay that he was just about half seasick. He had thought himself quite through with such foolishness and was not a little disgusted and ashamed and went to all sorts of lengths to prevent his shipmates from suspecting his condition. He need not have troubled so much, however, for there were older and more experienced men aboard that day who moved about with a greenish pallor and sad eyes. He put his will to it and refused to be beaten, with the result that, after a miserable attempt to eat some supper, merely for the sake of appearances, he felt better and when he went on watch was able to look the tumbling seas in the face without

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quailing. The gale subsided toward night, but the ocean didn't appear to know it and kept right on being cantankerous, perhaps because it was aware, as those in the plunging ships were not, that the gale's reformation was but temporary.

At seven bells Nelson was on lookout duty, a life-vest strapped around his body and everything but his face hidden by rubber garments. His station was near the waist and, fortunately or unfortunately, according to one's view of subsequent events, on the starboard. Behind him, affording partial shelter from wind and flying spray, arose one of the high funnels, while, above him, a whale-boat, one of the few small boats carried in time of war, lurched against the gloom of the sky. Occasionally he caught the faint glow of a dimmed stern light somewhere ahead, but for the rest the darkness was unrelieved. The night was chill, but he was warmly dressed under his slicker and felt no discomfort from cold. What was uncomfortable was the spray that flew slanting along and across the deck from the big waves that battered the ship's port bow. When a more than usually big sea came aboard the spray rattled against him like hail and the water came swashing about his feet, ankle deep, on its way to the scuppers. That was at half-past eleven, and for some

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ten minutes before that he had fancied that the wind, which had moderated earlier, was becoming fiercer again. Once a sudden hurricane gust sent him lurching against the pipe rail, tearing his feet from under him in its fury and leaving him clutching desperately at a davit. The onslaught had been so unexpected that it left him gasping for breath. After that he clung with gloved hands to the rail.

A quarter of an hour later he was no longer in doubt as to the behavior of the wind. It had swung a few points further north and had redoubled its fury. The *Gyandotte* heeled under its assault until Nelson was flattened against the rail. Its voice was a roar between the funnels and a demoniacal shriek in the rigging. Far above him the wireless aerial whistled shrilly. The wind was a blast from the icy reaches of the Greenland Sea and his clutching fingers inside the wet gloves stiffened and numbed. He was heartily glad that his relief would come soon and that he could tuck himself in his hammock, even though it seemed doubtful that sleep would come to many that night. The little cruiser was taking it hard, and no mistake. Steps hurried along the deck in the darkness behind him and off the starboard bow signals flashed. It was the flagship's

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blinker at work. Presently it ceased and then from here and there in the night other white throbs of light traveled across the hurtling waters. The *Gyandotte's* speed decreased and the tempest smote Nelson from a new angle. He knew that it meant that the ships had been ordered to change their course and run into the gale. His thoughts sped to the little submarines. He wondered if they could stay afloat in such a sea. And then, so suddenly that it had all happened before the cry of alarm was out of his throat, a wild gust threw itself upon the ship, the deck slanted until the boiling water threatened to engulf it, there was a rending crash behind the boy, something gigantic felled him and drove the breath from his body, and he knew no more.

The period of insensibility was probably brief. Perhaps less than a minute elapsed from the instant that the big funnel, torn away by the wind, crashed down upon boy and rail, until consciousness returned to him. When it did he was for the first brief moment too dazed to realize what had happened or where he was. It was the icy, breath-taking coldness that cleared his brain. He found himself rising through blackness and space, bruised, gasping, struggling instinctively, with the

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crash of waters about him and the howl of the gale.

He was overboard!

Terror clutched at his heart with fingers colder than the sea. He shrieked aloud, but the sound was torn from his lips by the wind. He thrashed his arms impotently and went down into a great depth, turning over and over while tons of water seethed over him with a dull roaring. He fought for the surface, his garments impeding him but the life-vest aiding, and presently felt the air in his nostrils again. His lungs were choked with the water he had swallowed and he felt horribly sick. But the first panic of unreasoning fright had passed and he was able to think, if not calmly, at least with some clearness. He realized that, horrible as his condition was, drowning was as yet a long way off if he could keep his head above water, for his life-vest would sustain him for days. If death came it would come from exhaustion, for to keep air in his lungs would mean a constant struggle and struggling would soon weary him. The cold he believed he could stand for some time. But he had no illusions. He knew that his chance of being rescued was not one in a hundred, that even could he hold out until daylight, and the storm should pass, there might be no ship to



The big funnel crashed down upon the boy.

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see him. Realizing the utter hopelessness of his plight calmed him. Having once accepted the inevitable, there was no sense in mutiny. He would live as long as he could. After that—well, after that one's troubles were past.

He had worked out of his rubber coat—his cap was long since gone—and now he struggled with his sea boots, and presently cast them off. The buoyance so gained helped wonderfully. His arms were freer for swimming and his feet no longer pulled him down. The seas seemed miles long at times. He was dragged up and up for whole minutes, the gale shrieking its fury in his ears, the water dashing itself into his eyes and mouth and nose, and then held poised for a brief moment high up between sea and sky and finally dropped sickeningly down the slant of rushing water into the next great hollow. All was turmoil and darkness. It was impossible to keep his head out of the water more than half the time, for he was rolled about like a log, and the best he could do was hold his breath and wait, then fill his lungs with the icy blast and be thankful. Somewhere about him were ships, but the nearest might now be a mile away, and even could he sight one in the impenetrable darkness those aboard would never hear his cries. Just to keep on was the only

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thing; swim as best he could to keep the cramps from his muscles, breathe when he might and die hard.

His mind was unnaturally active. Thoughts flew through his brain at lightning speed. He recalled a thousand incidents, visioned them swiftly and distinctly and passed them on. He wondered about his father, and sobbed once and felt terribly alone and weak. He remembered what he had set out to do a few short months before, and the war which had taken so much of his thought vanished to a mere pin-point of unimportance. Even a world war seemed a puny, silly thing here in this universe of blackness and storm. It would go on to its end, whatever that end might be, and after an interval everything would be the same as before. Flowers would spring up over a million graves and a new generation would run the plowshares across them, and the world would go on and on endlessly. It was strange and puzzling. He would not be there and no one would know or care. His life was just one tiny drop in a great ocean, and of no more importance. He wondered why. . . .

“Troy, Nelson A., seaman, lost overboard from U. S. S. *Gyandotte*; uncle, Peter Troy, Wonson, Me.” That’s the way the papers would have it.

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There was something woefully uninteresting about it. He had sometimes imagined his name with "killed in action" after it, but here was no implication of heroism. Perhaps he might say that he had "died in performance of his duty." He didn't know. Anyway, what did it matter, for there wouldn't be anyone to tell! Unless, he reflected the next moment, he could tell his mother. Nelson believed implicitly in Heaven, but whether he would get there was another question, he thought. And even if he did, what would it be like, and—Oh, it was a terrible jumble! All a fellow could do was wait and see. And meanwhile there was a task at hand, which was to get his head out of water occasionally and make a fight for it. That was it! He'd go down fighting, as became an American Navy man! There was comfort in that thought. It heartened him, and he struck out more vigorously and shook the brine from his eyes with new determination. He had found a reason for keeping up the struggle.

How long he had been in the water he neither knew nor considered, but it is likely that no more than a quarter of an hour at most had passed since he had been hurtled past the broken rail of the *Gyandotte*. Sliding over and over, fighting for breath, down the slope of a sea, his out-

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flung hand touched something. He drew it back instinctively, conscious of a sudden pain in the numb fingers. Then startled reason sent him swiftly groping, and in that instant he sensed rather than saw something beside him, something huge that flung the waves back in his stinging eyes. His eager fingers touched again, slid along a hard, wet surface that offered no hold, and he threw his head back and shouted with all his strength. And at the same moment his fingers found a hold, a tiny recess in the smooth object that was sliding past him, and they clutched convulsively and he felt himself being dragged forward through the welter of wind and water, his arm straining at its socket and his body pounded against an object as hard and resisting as a block of stone.

CHAPTER XI

TWENTY FATHOMS DOWN

HE knew then that Providence had guided him to the side of one of the other ships, that, could he but make himself heard above the roar of the elements, he might yet be saved. The realization brought a renewal of courage. The mere physical contact with something more solid, more stable than the hungry waves endowed his aching body with strength. If he could only hold on! The strain on his cramped fingers was terrific, and at every roll of the hull his body was thrown against it with a violence that must soon bring endurance to an end. He dashed the salt water from his face and shouted at the top of his tired lungs. And then, coming up choking and sputtering from a wave, again sent his appeal toward the deck. Surely, he thought, someone must hear him!

He could no longer stand the pain in the hand and arm that held him to the ship, and with difficulty he reached his right hand up and set the fin-

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gers into the narrow crevice and dropped the other away, numb and aching. This brought his face to the hull and turned his body so that it lay closer to the steel plates and was less buffeted. And the position raised his head further so that his breathing periods were more frequent. When his head was above water he shouted, but he began to lose hope now, for in that confused roar of wind and water his cries were scarcely audible to him. His hold was precarious and more than once he felt his fingers slipping away. Then, by every effort of weary muscles, pushing against the smooth surface with his left hand, he regained his hold. During one such struggle, with head thrown back and for the instant above the waves, he blinked the water from his eyes and tried to pierce the darkness and glimpse the rail far above him. It must have been some sense other than sight that told him the truth, for no gloom was ever more impenetrable and even the hand that protected his face from the hull was beyond his vision. But, looking up, he suddenly realized that there were no towering sides above him, that it was not a cruiser or destroyer he was clinging to, but a submarine!

And then something that had puzzled him dimly was explained. In groping along the hull he had

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gained the impression that, instead of bulging outward as it arose it did the opposite. Now, at the risk of losing his hold, he sent his left hand exploring at arm's length and found instant corroboration. The hull receded sharply. He realized then that perhaps no more than another twelve inches beyond his utmost reach was the deck. If he could only pull himself up there! But nothing to grip to, neither protuberance nor recess, met his searching fingers. Somewhere not very far distant must be the conning tower and bridge, and when the next deluge had washed over him and passed he shouted with a desperation born of the knowledge of help at hand and of failing strength. But even as he shouted the thought came to him that in such weather they would be navigating the boat from the tightly-closed conning tower and not from the exposed bridge, and that no cries he was capable of would penetrate its steel sides.

He knew that he could not last much longer. His arm felt as though it was dead, or, to be more exact, it didn't feel at all; sensation had quite passed from it, and it was only by painfully working a finger that he could be certain that his hand still clutched the edge of the little crevice. He was far less reconciled to drowning than he had

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been before. The injustice of being thrown into the path of rescue and then mercilessly denied it produced a sense of rebellion and even anger. A few feet away from him, beyond that thin steel well, men were talking, perhaps laughing, in warmth and light and comfort, while he was doomed to perish miserably within arm's length of them! A sudden surge of mingled wrath and terror overcame him, and he rained weak blows on the hull until his knuckles were torn and bleeding and the salt set them to stinging, and strove, as the waves would let him, to knock his knees, too, against the plates. Then a calmer mood came, and the hopelessness of further struggle settled over him. If he abandoned the submarine he would be no worse off than before save that he had depleted his strength for swimming. In one way he would better himself, for drowning was far less imminent when riding the seas than while being smothered with the waves that broke over and against the boat. And, after all, he had no choice, for he could no longer hold on. His fingers were slipping fast now and he had no strength to work them back into place. But, somehow, having decided, he found it hard to act. As unfeeling as it had proved, that submarine was tangible and friendly, and letting go

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would be like releasing one's hold of a rope to drop into unknown depths. He compromised with his decision. He would stay where he was as long as he could. Time enough to cast adrift when his fingers no longer performed their task. He shouted no more now. He only waited and endured.

Moments passed, and then light beat on his closed lids and he opened his eyes. A wave hissed over him, but through it a white glare penetrated. The water passed, the boat rolled, and, choking and gasping, his aching body tossed sprawling against the hull, he heard a voice issue from the fierce radiance that still engulfed him. The words were whisked away by the wind. Something dragged at his free arm and he felt himself being pulled like a sack of grain up the wet, sloping side. He experienced neither joy nor relief, but only a dim wonder. And about that time he ceased to take further interest in things.

Minutes later he awoke to the knowledge of something hot and fragrant at his lips and a voice saying "Drink." He obeyed and a warm glow permeated his chilled body. For a brief instant he opened his eyes wide enough to receive an impression of a painfully white place that, to a vision so long accustomed to darkness, seemed

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ablaze with lights. Forms moved hazily. The air reeked of oil. An appalling tumult assaulted his ears. The force that held his head up was removed and he sank back with a sigh and went to sleep again.

When he next awoke he was still in the white place and the lights still gleamed, but the noise had ceased and the smell of oil had given way to an odor he could not describe even to himself. And, which was stranger than all, instead of the pitching and tossing he remembered, the place where he lay was almost motionless.

Painfully, for he felt weak and dizzy, and every bone and muscle in his tired body ached, he stopped gazing at the bottom of the bunk above him and moved his head so that he could view his surroundings. He began to remember slowly as he did so, and by the time he realized his surroundings the events of the night before were in orderly sequence. He sighed deeply, and:

"Gee! I'm still alive!" he muttered.

It was a strange place in which he found himself, but his visit to the submarine in New London that time enabled him to recognize it. He was lying in one of the lower bunks in the forward battery compartment which is the men's quarters. There were twelve of these bunks in all, six on each

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side, three in a tier. One or two of those opposite were occupied. An iron ladder led from the floor to a closed hatch above. Everything was painted white and sweated moisture. A table disputed the center of the compartment with the ladder and about it four men, in soiled and greasy dungarees, were seated. Further aft a sixth man was in evidence. He was drawing coffee at a steaming urn, and Nelson knew him for the cook. There was an electric range beside him, and, opposite, food lockers. Beyond the galley end of the compartment a watertight door stood open, revealing a vista of further compartments. Everywhere ran pipes and wires, with a multitude of valves and switches. The odor which had puzzled him at first now yielded certain recognizable ingredients: hot coffee and food; battery fumes; moist clothing.

He was beneath a cover of two gray blankets. They had removed his outer clothing and it lay, half dried, across his feet. He sniffed longingly at the coffee streaming from the faucet of the shining urn, and when, after a moment, the cook approached the table with three aluminum cups of it in hand, he found his voice.

"May I have some, please?" he asked weakly.

The cook, a lad not much Nelson's senior, with

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an unmistakable Irish countenance, looked over his shoulder, and the men at the table craned their heads.

"Hello, kid!" said the cook. "You comin' to? Sure you can have some. All you want, I guess."

One of the others stepped across to the bunk. "How are you, Jack?" he asked.

"All right, I think. What boat's this?"

"Q-4. Where'd you come from?"

"Don't be bothering the lad with questions, Terry. He's down and out, I'll bet."

"I feel pretty fair, thanks," said Nelson. "I belong on the *Gyandotte*. I was on lookout last night—is it morning now?" The man nodded. "Last night it was, then. Something happened. Maybe a boat blew off the davits. Anyway, I went overboard. After awhile I caught hold of this boat and hung on. I shouted, but I thought you didn't hear me. Then someone flashed a light and I woke up down here. That's about all."

"And it's plenty, kid! You were all in when they grabbed you. How long were you in the water?"

"How does he know?" asked one of the others with deep disgust. "Suppose he looked at his watch and timed himself? Sit down here, you

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chuckle-head, and sop up your coffee and leave the lad be."

"Out o' my way, Terry!" The cook thrust a cup of coffee into Nelson's hand and added sugar. "Kid," he said, "you won the long-distance rough-and-tumble record last night, all right! One of you fellows tell the luff the boy's awake. He wants to speak to him."

"Ay, ay, Cookie! Cut some more bread while I'm gone, will you?" One of the men arose and disappeared through the after door. Nelson propped himself on an elbow and stirred his coffee.

"The storm's all over, isn't it?" he asked.

"Is it, then?" said the cook. "You wouldn't think so if you was up above. It was blowin' about seventy when we left."

"Left? Oh, you mean that you've submerged?"

"You bet you! We've been down nearly four hours now. I've seen a few rough nights in my short but eventful life, kid, but last night had 'em all beat! We was shufflin' around here like dice in a box. How you ever lived in the water is what gets me!"

"How far down are we? Are we sitting on the bottom?"

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“Sitting on the bot—say, where do you think you are? New York harbor? There ain’t no bottom here, or if there is it would take a day to find it! We’re a hundred and twenty feet under, or were an hour ago, and we’re doing about four knots.”

“Gosh!” exclaimed Nelson in awed tones. “A hundred and twenty feet below the surface! Isn’t that a lot?”

“It ain’t too much in this rumpus, kid, believe me! Have some coffee? I’d give you some hash, but they said you wasn’t to eat till the luff seen you. Here he comes now.”

The lieutenant was a man of about thirty-two or -three years of age, short, squarely-built, bearded, round of face and dressed in a stained uniform whose gold braid was dulled and discolored. He had a gruff voice and an all-enveloping smile.

“Hello, Neptune!” he greeted. “All ready to go back where you belong, are you? We’re going to shoot you out a tube in a minute.”

“No, sir.” Nelson saluted weakly, and smiled. “Not quite yet, sir.”

“Well, how are you feeling? And where in the name of common sense did you come from?”

“I’m sort of tired, sir, that’s all. I went over-

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board from the *Gyandotte*. Something broke loose on deck and struck me and first thing I knew I was in the water."

"Pleasant experience! Go ahead and finish your coffee."

"I've had enough, sir, thanks."

"Feeling hungry?"

"No, sir, not a bit."

"Just as well. We'll feed you up later. Don't know how soon we'll be able to land you back on your ship, though. If this gale keeps on we'll be down some time. What kept you from drowning?"

"I don't know, sir. I had a life-vest on, of course. After I'd been floating around awhile my hand struck against this boat and found a sort of hole——"

"Scupper, probably. How long were you hanging on before we got you?"

Nelson frowned and shook his head. "I don't know. It seemed a long time, but I don't think it could have been more than a quarter of an hour."

"Great Scot! Who was it heard the knocking? You, Clancy, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir. Brainard heard it, too. I thought we were scraping a mine. I wouldn't have heard

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it only I was in my bunk, and it's a top one, and the knocks were right alongside my head."

"Yes, and he fell out in a hurry, sir!" chuckled the man called Terry. "He did it in the quickest time I ever saw!"

"So would you have if you'd heard it," growled Clancy. "I thought sure we were making friends with a floating mine and I didn't want to be so close to it."

"Don't blame you!" laughed the lieutenant. "Lucky for this man we're a single-huller and that you heard it, though. What's your name?"

"Troy, sir; seaman, second class, Reserve."

"Reserve, eh? Well, there's hope for the Reserves if they're all like you, Troy. You have luck, my boy, and that's better than being born rich. Mix him up some gruel in an hour or so, Cook, and make him take it. We'll put you aboard your ship the first chance there is, Troy, but you'll have to make the best of us for awhile."

"Thank you, sir. I—I'd like to—that is, I mean I'm awfully grateful to you for taking care of me, sir. I guess I'd have been a goner by this time if you hadn't pulled me aboard."

"I guess you would have," rejoined the lieutenant dryly. "Don't see how you stuck it out as long as you did. You'll never die by drowning,

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young Neptune! Those your duds there? Why aren't they dried? Can't you hang these in front of the stove somehow, Cook? He will want something to put on when he gets up. Here, Clancy, you take charge of this man. See that he's fed and has dry clothing. When he gets up give him something to do to earn his passage."

The lieutenant nodded, frowned, smiled, and strode back to the central station.

Clancy, a red-haired youth of twenty-four or so, rating as a first class machinist's mate, forthwith took over his duties. He viewed Nelson severely, standing beside the bunk with legs spread wide and oil-stained hands on his hips.

"Now then, Mr. Neptune, you heard the luff's words, didn't you?"

Nelson nodded and smiled.

"What you grinning about? Respect is what I'll have from you, my son, and a lot of it! Don't you know better than to grin at your superior officer? What sort of manners do they teach you in the Naval Reserve? Stow that grin, I tell you, and look respectful!"

"Yes, sir," responded Nelson demurely. The petty officer grunted.

"That's better. Now then, hungry?"

"No, thank you."

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“Good thing you ain’t. You wouldn’t get anything fit to eat on this boat, anyway. Just the same there’ll be some gruel for you pretty soon if the cook don’t forget it or fall asleep. Now then, Cookie, look alive with the young gentleman’s wearing apparel! Oh, you’ve got it, have you?”

“I have; and as to fallin’ asleep, believe me, Clancy, I ain’t never fallen asleep standin’ on my two feet like you do most of the time.”

“Is that so? One of your feet would be big enough, without using the other at all. When those clothes are dry, you’d better get into ’em, Mr. Neptune, and then feed your face with some gruel—if you can eat it, which I misdoubt. Then report to me in the engine room. Get that?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Right-o!” Clancy viewed him with a fierce scowl, dropped one eyelid in a portentous wink and swung himself out.

Only the cook was left now, save for the occupants of one or two bunks who stirred uneasily in their sleep. The cook had improvised a clothes line above the electric stove and Nelson’s things were already gently steaming.

“Wet clothes is against the rules entirely,” observed the cook cheerfully. “But if the luff passes ’em it’s not for me to be kickin’. Now I’ll start

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that gruel for you, Nep, but I don't know what it'll be like, for I never made none!"

"It doesn't matter," murmured Nelson. "I'm not hungry."

"Makes no difference. If the luff says you eat, you eat if it kills you."

Nelson digested that in silence a moment. Then: "How many are there aboard here?" he asked.

"Three officers and twenty-one men. And one fresh young Reservist," he added as an afterthought.

"Meaning me? If you call me fresh I'll report to Clancy that your gruel's no good."

"Clancy? That club-footed, knock-kneed galoot! Much I care about Clancy. Where's that package o' oatmeal I had once? Gruel on a submarine! They'll be askin' for asparagus and artichokes next!"

A new party of men entered, three capable looking youngsters not much older than Nelson, and only removing their sea-boots, climbed into bunks. They viewed Nelson with a sort of tired interest, but asked no questions. In something less than three minutes as many new and assorted snores were added to the symphony. Occasionally a sailor passed through toward the bow, or hurried

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aft again. The sound of voices traveling from the compartments further back reached Nelson as from an underground passage. There was only a slight motion perceptible, a queer lunging and rolling combined that was quite new to anything he had before experienced. Save for the sound of voices and the musical efforts of the sleeping men and Cookie's muttered apostrophes to the simmering gruel, the boat was oddly still. Once when someone far forward in the engine compartment dropped a wrench the clatter was startling. The atmosphere was close, but Nelson found no inconvenience in breathing. Something, and he thought it might be the air, made him strangely sluggish and sleepy, and he was on the point of dozing off again when he heard from beside his bunk a startled exclamation:

"For the love of Mike! See who's here!"

Opening his eyes he looked up into the astounded face of Martin Townsend.

CHAPTER XII

IN THE SUBMARINE "Q-4"

NELSON couldn't remember having ever been so glad to see anyone as he was to see the lad who, his surprise turning to pleasure, thrust a brown and not over-clean hand toward the bunk. He had been many times pretty lonesome since leaving the *Wanderer*, and the fact came to him as he seized the proffered hand and gripped it hard. Martin Townsend's laughter rang out gayly as he seated himself precariously on the edge of the bunk, and Nelson found himself joining in for no very apparent reason. Somehow, finding Townsend again was like finding an old friend, even though they had been together but a little over an hour in all their lives!

What happened after that is easily imagined. Martin took possession of Nelson and, standing by while he dressed himself in his togs which were as dry as they were likely to get in an atmosphere that would have discouraged a hygrometer,

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and a pair of borrowed boots, and superintending the process of devouring a tin cup of strange oatmeal gruel, he afterwards bore him off in the direction of the after battery compartment which, save for the absence of cooking arrangements was similar to the corresponding compartment forward. In the central station Nelson saw Captain Hale and the junior officer, Lieutenant Morris, both clear-eyed, lean-faced men well under thirty years. It was the captain who noted them as they passed and spoke to Martin.

"Is this the man we picked up, Townsend?"

"Yes, sir."

Captain Hale looked Nelson over with undisguised interest as the latter paused and saluted. "What's your name?" he asked.

Nelson gave the information, and, in reply to further questions, narrated briefly the story of his adventures. The junior lieutenant turned from his post at the gyroscopic compass and listened.

"Sounds like a romance to me, my boy," laughed the captain at the end, his gray eyes twinkling. "Have you tried it on the marines yet?"

"No, sir, I've had no chance," answered Nelson, smiling.

"Well, I suppose it must be so. You're pretty good proof of it. But it beats any story I've heard

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yet in the Navy. You're a mighty lucky fellow to get out, of a scrape like that. What was it like on the *Gyandotte* last night?"

"Pretty rough, sir."

"I guess it was. You know the *Gyandotte*, George," he added, turning to the lieutenant. "Weren't you on her once?"

"Yes, I was with the *Gyandotte* five years ago. It was her last cruise. We thought she wouldn't hold together to make port. She's been overhauled, though, I believe."

"Hope so. Well, make yourself at home, Troy. Townsend will find you something to do perhaps. We'll put you back on your ship when we can, but I don't know when we'll see her again."

"Thank you, sir." Nelson followed Martin into the next compartment and was introduced to two of the crew who were lounging there. Something in their attitude toward Martin prompted Nelson to ask, as he seated himself on a bench beside the other: "Are you a petty officer?"

"Surest thing you know, old scout!" Martin laughed. "They made me a gunner's mate, third class. Don't ask me why, though. See that you treat me properly after this. Now tell me the whole yarn, Troy. What's happened to you since

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I saw you last? Did you see me that day on the river? Where's your friend Mason?"

"Mason? Oh, you mean Masters. Billy's still on the *Wanderer*, I think. I'd be there yet, too, if it hadn't been for a piece of luck." Whereupon Nelson told of his meeting on the train with the Navy official and his transfer to the *Gyandotte*. And that led to the battle off Bermuda with the *Mahlow*. Martin had to have full details of that encounter and was disappointed by the colossal ignorance displayed by the narrator. "You see," explained Nelson, "you don't have much chance to watch things, Townsend, on a gun crew. You have your hands pretty full and you can't see much, anyhow. At least, you can't if you're shellman, because you're behind the gun all the time. Most of what I know about that row came from hearing the other fellows talk afterwards."

"It must have been great!" sighed Martin. "Wish I'd been there. Still, I wouldn't have had much fun, I guess, since you didn't try torpedoes on the Hun. Does the *Gyandotte* carry tubes?"

"No. How long have you been on this boat?"

"Three weeks. A little over. She's a dandy, isn't she? Have you been over her? Like to look around?"

IN THE SUBMARINE "Q-4"

"Yes, indeed," responded the other eagerly. "Lieutenant Somebody—the one with the gruff voice—told a man named Clancy to take me in charge, and Clancy told me to report to him in the engine room. Maybe I'd better, eh?"

"Clancy?" laughed the other. "He's a fine lad to have charge of anyone! Come on in here and we'll see him."

The engine room was the next compartment aft, and they found Clancy alone there engaged in polishing the bright work of the port engine, although so far as Nelson could see every inch of brass or copper or steel was already immaculate.

Clancy's willingness to be relieved of his responsibility was so patent as to be almost impolite, and the two boys went on to the after compartment. Here were the main motors and the auxiliary machinery of all kinds. Two men were in charge there, a petty officer and an oiler. The low hum of the motors and the faint, slow churn of the twin propellers alone broke the silence. Martin explained the mechanism that was driving the steel cylinder through the depths, once or twice calling on the electrician for aid. On the surface, Nelson learned, it was the big Diesel oil-burning engines that supplied the power, but,

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since they depended on a large amount of air for their performance, it was not possible to use them when submerged. When ready to sink the Diesels were stopped and uncoupled from the shafts and the motors started. These obtained their energy from storage batteries located beneath the deck on which they stood. The petty officer in charge explained the working of the contractor gear by which the control of the motors is effected in the central station. The main motors compartment, like every other section of the submarine, was painted white and was as clean as a Dutch kitchen. The electric bulbs flooded the place with light. The arching sides were crowded with switchboards and hung with a confusion of cables and wires.

Returning forward, they passed into the long compartment at that moment presided over by the diligent Clancy. The two great engines occupied every bit of space there save for a central passage barely wide enough to move through. Clancy held forth at length and with enthusiasm on those engines, but Nelson, whose bent of mind was not mechanical, found it difficult to understand what was told him. He did get away with one or two interesting facts, however: as, for instance that the Diesels burned crude oil instead of kero-

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sene or gasoline, at a vast saving, and that instead of having the charges in the cylinders ignited by electric sparks, in the only way he had ever heard of, the engines produced their own heat for ignition by compression.

"It's like this," elaborated Clancy. "These are four cycle engines, do you see? That is, one of the pistons does four strokes to one explosion of the charge, two up and two down. Now take this fellow. When the piston in this cylinder goes down it draws a lot of air into the cylinder after it. When it goes up again it compresses that air something fierce; about five hundred pounds to the square inch. That heats the air, do you see, to something like a thousand degrees. Next oil is sprayed into the cylinder by compressed air, and when it hits that hot air already there it lights. That's what they call combustion, and that sends the piston down again and turns the shaft over. That's the third stroke. The fourth is the next up-stroke and that pushes the burnt gases out, and there you are!"

Nelson shook his head. "It sounds all right," he said, "but what makes the engine start first of all?"

"The storage batteries."

"And how fast will they drive the boat?"

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"Sixteen knots at a pinch, but we usually do twelve on account of using too much fuel at high speed. You got to think of fuel, you know."

"I suppose so. And where do you keep that?"

"Everywhere." Clancy waved a big hand vaguely. "There's tanks of it all over. The main tanks are fore and aft, next to the keel, but we've smaller ones here and there. There isn't any space wasted on one of these contraptions, Nep."

"Why did he call you Nep?" asked Martin curiously as they went on. Nelson explained and his friend chuckled. "That's not so bad, either. Guess I'll have to call you that, too. This we call the after quarters, but technically it's the after battery compartment. About half the storage batteries are underfoot here. You can see the cables leading forward there. These gratings lift up when you want to get at the cells. That's my bunk there. Those cupboards are where we stow our gear. Next is the central station. Can't show you around there, though, for the Old Man doesn't like us hanging about. Everything's controlled from there, you see."

They paused inside the door and looked through into the next compartment. There were nine persons there, the captain and first officer

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and seven men. It was quite a spacious chamber, as it needed to be in order to accommodate all those necessary to navigate the boat under water. A ladder led upward to the conning tower above and a bench ran along one side, but for the rest the furnishings of the central station were all mechanical. Dials, valves, gyroscope compass, manifolds, steering and diving wheels, depth gauges, levers, clinometer for determining the boat's inclination, motor controllers, engine room telegraph, navigating lights, voice pipes and other things were indicated by Martin. Here was the brain of the craft. Every activity was controlled from this white-walled, light-flooded chamber and from it wires and pipes led forward and aft like nerves. Two gunner's mates were at the big brass wheels controlling the diving rudders, while in front of them a gauge indicated the boat's depth. Their duty, explained Martin, was to keep the submarine on an even keel, and at the depth ordered by the navigating officer, by means of the forward and aft diving rudders. Near them a mechanic presided over the air and water manifolds of the ballast and trimming tanks. A fourth man was in charge of the Kingston valves which flooded the main ballast tanks during submergence. A steersman was at the wheel to the left of the

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forward door and two electricians stood by the Number Two periscope ready for duty. The place was a white vault of shining machinery that made no noise in which the quiet conversation of the two officers was strangely distinct.

Martin led the way through to the forward battery compartment where some half-dozen of the crew were at rest in their bunks or seated about the table. The cook was busy at the electric range, for the hour, as Nelson had seen by the clock in the central station, was close on ten. Martin exchanged remarks with the fellows around the table and led the way aft to another watertight door. Passing through this, Nelson found himself in the wireless room, a small compartment at present holding one man, who, with a telephone receiver strapped to his head, was listening at the Fessenden Oscillator, or submarine signal apparatus. The compartment was a maze of wires, meters, switches, coils and other electrical contrivances. Beyond the wireless room were small staterooms occupied by the officers. They were tiny bare white-walled cells containing little more than a bunk, a chest of drawers, a small writing desk and a lavatory each. Beyond the open door of one Nelson glimpsed the

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gruff-voiced first lieutenant who had dubbed him Neptune.

"Here's where I live when I'm on duty," said Martin as they passed through still another door into the bow torpedo compartment. They were now close to the submarine's nose and the moisture-studded roof above was perceptibly nearer their heads. Facing them were the butts of the four twenty-one-inch torpedo tubes, each a round white-enameled bulls-eye at first glance. A second look, however, showed the bulls-eyes to be dish-shaped covers on long, curved hinges which, as Martin explained, were opened by hand to expose the breeches for loading. On chocks at each side of the compartment rested eight torpedoes, which, with those already in the tubes, made twelve in all. Besides the torpedo tubes the compartment also held the anchor winches, and Martin showed how the anchor chains could be slipped by a simple device in case of fouling.

There were two men in there, busy with oiled rags when the visitors entered. Martin introduced them to Nelson and he received a hearty, if somewhat greasy handshake from each. He found the torpedo compartment more interesting than any of the others and asked a dozen questions in as many minutes. Martin was very will-

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ing to explain everything, his mates throwing in helpful interpolations. (It was evident to Nelson from the way in which these latter viewed him that he was looked on by the crew of the *Q-4* as rather a remarkable individual.)

"Here's the way it's done," began Martin. "This tube"—laying a hand affectionately on one of the breeches—"has a watertight cap at the outer end of it. It can be opened or closed by turning this little wheel. When we want to load a tube we close the outer cap first of all. Then we open this inner cover, like this." He suited action to word and Nelson, stooping, peered into the tube which already held a torpedo. "We roll one of those torpedoes up and slide it in. This cover is closed again; you see it has a rubber joint here which makes it watertight. Then——"

"Prepare for firing, Mart," suggested one of the others.

"Yes, that's so. I forgot to say that we remove the safety pin before we load the torpedo, but you probably know about that. And, of course, we set the depth gear. That done, we close this inner cover, so. Next we open this valve which lets in water from the filling tank. There's one of these tanks for each tube, and

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each holds just enough water to fill in around the torpedo."

"But why not draw the water from the outside?" asked Nelson.

"Because you'd add about seven hundred pounds of weight to the boat and start her sinking. You see, you've got to maintain the same stability. When you fill around the torpedo with water from the tank you're not taking on any more weight, you're only shifting it from one place to another, and without changing its longitudinal position. Get that?" Nelson nodded.

"Then we open the outer cap and we're ready for firing. We report Number One or Two, or whichever it may be, ready over the tube, and the Old Man just presses a button. Air compressed to a hundred pounds to the square inch butts in through here behind the torpedo and out she goes at thirty knots. Simple, what?"

Nelson smiled. "When you know how. But look here, Townsend. After you've shot your first torpedo where do you get water from to fill the tube around the next one? Your tank's empty, isn't it?"

"Right-o! But listen to me, old settler. When your 'moldie' leaves the tube the water flows into it. The weight of that water is only a few hun-

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dred pounds less than the weight of the torpedo and water together was before. So next thing we do we close the outer cap again. Then we pump seven hundred pounds of that water back into the filling tank. After that we blow the rest of the water in the tube into what's called the compensating tank. Now, then, we've still got the same weight aboard as we had before we parted with Mr. Torpedo. Do I make myself plain?"

"Quite, thanks. It—it's rather wonderful, isn't it?"

"Well, it's ingenious. I'll say that much for it. After all the water is out we open this inner breech again and we're all ready to slip in another torpedo. And that's how *that's* done! Jimmy here could have doped it out better for you, but I guess you've got the general idea. How's the air, fellows?"

"Getting a bit thick, I'd say," replied the one alluded to as Jimmy. He sniffed knowingly and then took a deep breath. "Wonder how it is on the surface."

"Blowing like the Old Harry, I guess. When did we dive? I was asleep."

"About three-twenty, I think it was. We're good for another fifteen or sixteen hours yet, but I hope he'll pop up before that. It's the bat-

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tery smell that gets me. I can taste the stuff already."

"Can you really stay down as long as he said?" asked Nelson as they made their way along the passage to the after quarters.

"We can stay down as long as our battery holds out, which at four knots an hour, about what we're doing, would be from twenty-two to twenty-four hours. Anyway, that's what they say. I was never down more than four hours until now. As far as the air is concerned, I guess no one knows how long this tub could stay down. I dare say the air would hold out about as long as the battery, though. That needn't worry you, Nep. We'll be popping out long before that."

CHAPTER XIII

“SURFACE!”

DINNER was not very tempting to Nelson, probably because he still felt the effects of his adventure of the night before. Besides, he had eaten nearly a pint of Cookie's remarkable oatmeal gruel, which had been like no other gruel Nelson had ever tasted. The meal consisted of beef stew and potatoes, bread, pudding and tea. While the variety was not great, there was plenty of everything. During the meal Nelson got better acquainted with the crew of the *Q-4*. They averaged, he guessed, about twenty-two years of age, although one or two were apparently no older than he and several were in the thirties. He very soon learned that, just as the destroyer men looked down on the men of the battleships as mollycoddles, so the submarine men viewed the destroyer crews with pitying contempt. There was a good deal of interest betrayed in the fortunes of the other subs, one or two of which were very small boats and, in the opinion of the

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Q-4's men, not able to look after themselves in a storm like the present. There was also much speculation as to whether the companion boats had "run it out" or dived. Nelson gathered that each commander had been free to follow his judgment as to submerging. One or two of the others were known to have left the surface and communication had been held with one by means of the submarine telegraph during the morning.

After dinner Martin went on duty in the torpedo compartment, taking Nelson with him. The latter spent nearly two hours there, busied part of the time wiping, while Martin went over the mechanism of a torpedo and delivered a lecture on the missile. Nelson was initiated into the mysteries of the tiny four-cylinder engine, the automatic steering device and the depth gear. In fact, by the time Martin had finished his discourse Nelson could have passed an examination on the subject of the Bliss-Leavitt torpedo very creditably. Martin informed him that the nose contained three hundred pounds of TNT or trinitrotoluol, and after that Nelson treated the business ends of the torpedoes with great respect, although Martin assured him that until the butterfly nut on the protruding tip of the firing pin was off there was no danger. This nut looked like a miniature

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propeller, having wings that caused it to turn in the water and so release the locking gear of the firing pin. A second safety device was a bolt passing from the outside of the war head to the firing pin to prevent the latter being moved back against the percussion cap. Behind the war head was the compressed air tank by which the propeller at the tail was rotated. When Martin remarked that the air chamber was at the moment charged with 2,250 pounds of air Nelson began to wonder if the war head was, after all, the more dangerous part of the thing! He sincerely hoped that the steel wells were equal to that pressure of over a ton to each square inch! The balance chamber mechanism was a bit too much for Nelson, although Martin patiently tried to make him understand the functions of the gyroscope and the pendulum control. In the end Nelson mastered the reason for those devices, but he was hazy as to why they performed the remarkable stunts attributed to them!

Martin stopped lecturing before he became tiresome and the two boys talked of less technical things, one of them being home. Perhaps it would be more exact to say that Martin talked about his home and Nelson listened. Nelson's home just then had few attractions for him as a matter for

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discourse. They became very well acquainted that afternoon, and by supper time Nelson, for his part, felt as if the acquaintance was of years' standing. Possibly there is something in being in a watertight cylinder a hundred or more feet below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean that expedites friendship! At all events, the two boys got along fast, and Nelson, who had never had a real chum of anywhere near his own age, was quite breathlessly happy. The afternoon flew by and it was “grub time” again. Nelson's appetite was fifty per cent better than at noon. They had “submarine turkey” for supper, a viand better known to Nelson as canned salmon, and bread and butter and apple-sauce—also canned—and enough coffee to float the boat. The big coffee urn was always simmering and always on tap, and the amount of the beverage that was consumed during twenty-four hours aboard the *Q-4* was awe-inspiring. Some of the men seldom passed the galley that they didn't stop and pour a cupful of it down their throats. And, or so Nelson thought, it wasn't awfully good coffee at that!

By six bells the air in the submarine had become rather foul, and one noticed it by an increased drowsiness and an irritated condition of eyes and throat. In the quarters they began to

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Speak of going up, and it seemed to Nelson that several of the men showed a distinct uneasiness, while many who should have been in their bunks remained up. Nelson found his eyes closing several times and had to move about to throw off the sleepiness that was creeping over him. About half an hour later there was a sudden inclination of the submarine as she began to rise. The sensation was a novel one to Nelson and he cast an alarmed look at Martin.

"Going up," said the latter reassuringly. "Come have a look."

They went to the door leading to the central station and peered through. But save that the captain was at the motor control and that the other occupants of the shining, white compartment looked more alert, the scene was no different than earlier. A petty officer in front of the depth gauge said distinctly:

"Eighty-five, sir."

There was silence again. It seemed to Nelson that there was a more perceptible hum from the end of the passage where the motors were. The slant from bow to stern was slight, but you realized it when you walked, and there was a different motion to the boat, less a roll than a queer

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side sway. The captain moved a lever in front of him gently.

"Sixty, sir!" announced the officer at the gauge.

"Hold her at fifty," said the captain.

"Ay-y-y, sir!"

The men at the diving rudder controls moved imperceptibly.

"Fifty-seven! Fifty-five! Fifty-three!"

The captain swung the lever again. The sensation of climbing upward passed and the submarine rode on an even keel, the men at the wheels turning them slowly, their eyes on the indicators. The *Q-4* was in less quiet water now, for she swung sidewise and dipped fore and aft. The first officer spoke across the compartment.

"Still at it up there."

The captain nodded, peered at the gyroscopic compass and turned about. "We'll give her another three hours, I think. Pass the word for all hands off watch to bunk in and get some sleep."

Nelson climbed into his bunk, after removing boots and jacket, which was as much as any of the others took off, and did his best to get to sleep. But, although he couldn't keep his eyes open save by an effort, sleep was elusive. He finally fell into a sort of doze during which he was more than half aware of movement and sound about

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him and of the unquiet swinging of the boat. He felt much as he had felt once several years before when a dentist had given him gas to extract a tooth, sort of half here and half there, as he expressed it to himself. He dreamed ridiculous things, although he would have declared afterwards that he had not been enough asleep to dream. One vivid nightmare, in which he was astride a torpedo and shooting along the surface of the water at something like a mile a minute making straight for the towering side of the biggest dreadnought that human imagination had ever visioned, brought him awake with a yelp of terror.

"'Tain't so," said a sleepily voice from across the passage.

The clock in the central station said *ting-ting, ting-ting, ting!* Relieved to find that it really wasn't so, Nelson settled his head in the crook of his arm again and again closed his eyes. But just as drowsiness was stealing back he heard from beyond the door the short command: "Rise!"

It didn't refer to him, of course, but he obeyed it, curiosity getting the better of sleepiness. There was a sound of rushing air and water as the tanks were blown. He tumbled out of the bunk and stole to the door, doing the last few steps uphill as the

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submarine began its climb toward the surface. He was sensible of increased speed. There was a new man at the depth gauge, a gunner's mate, and he was calling off the depths in a gruff voice:

"Forty! . . . Thirty! . . . Twenty! . . ."

Every instant the boat rolled more and more and Nelson clutched the side of the bulkhead to keep his feet.

"Raise Number Two periscope!"

"Ten! . . . Five!"

"Surface!"

Instantly a terrific jar and clatter broke forth as the Diesels took up the task. The submarine wallowed and plunged and quivered. The sudden change from silence to pandemonium was nerve-shattering and appalling. Nelson could hear the seas thunder down on the steel deck and rush off, leaving the submarine staggering. The air already reeked of oil. The first officer hurried up the ladder to the conning tower, followed by a seaman. The captain, who had been peering into the eye-piece of the periscope, swinging it to all points of the compass, turned away.

"Conning tower hatch," he ordered.

A response came from above, and an instant later Nelson felt the refreshing air that blew down into the foul depths. The first officer descended

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again, a precarious proceeding with the little craft trying her best to turn upside down.

"Wind about forty, I think, and a bad sea. I could see nothing up there."

"Nor I," replied the captain. He picked up the mouthpiece of a voice tube. "Collins? Try to get the flagship, please. Stiles, code our position and ask for orders. Report that we're recharging batteries and shall submerge again in about four hours."

Nelson pulled his boots on with difficulty, rocking about on the bunk, and had just succeeded when Martin climbed down from above like a monkey, yawning and blinking, to subside at Nelson's side.

"We're up, aren't we?" he inquired sleepily. "Fine little sea on, I must say. We'll have four or five hours of this now while they make juice. Oh, gee, why did I ever leave home?" He yawned dismally. "This thing of being a bloomin' hero isn't what it's cracked up to be, Nep. Listen to that! Sometimes I wish this old sardine can had a double hull! Wouldn't you think those seas meant to come right on in and sit in your lap? Well, no more sleep while we're dancing around up here, that's sure and certain! Say, wouldn't

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it be a bully night to get a torpedo square under the conning tower?"

"Would a torpedo run straight in such a sea?" asked Nelson practically.

"Search me! I suppose not, though. Still, if a U-boat came close enough and aimed at our broadside—*Bang!* Good night, everybody!"

"But there aren't any U-boats way over here, are there?"

"Probably not, though we aren't so far out of the zone after all. If you could always tell where those sneaking critters kept themselves everything would be easy. They've got a cute way of being where you don't expect them, Nep. Thank goodness, we're getting air in here at last. It was sort of fierce when I went by-low."

"Are they recharging the batteries now?" asked Nelson.

"Suppose so. They'd better be if they aren't, because first thing anyone knows one of these little ripples will bust in a few plates and we'll be exceedingly wet! Let's go through and get some coffee."

Martin didn't trouble to pull his boots on, but shuffled, staggering along, to the forward quarters. Most of the men off duty were already there, which, since a submarine operating on the

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surface requires but few men to handle her, means that the forward battery compartment was crowded from bulkhead to bulkhead. Nelson and Martin plumped in amongst them, stumbling over a confusion of legs, and subsided on the edge of a bunk whose occupant, sprawled fully dressed therein, only grunted as they collided with his ribs. Two or three of the men were singing, although their voices were scarcely to be heard above the roar of the engines and riot of the seas, and the cook, looking rather sleepy, leaned against the stove and strummed imaginary music from a sauce-pan.

“When I first went to sea my father said to me,
‘Jack, keep away from the Submarinery.’
Bottled up tight and sick all night,
I know now that *Dad was right!*”

“Aw, cut it!” begged a miserable voice from an upper bunk.

“Hello, Tim! What cheer?” cried a facetious youth below. There was no reply to the challenge.

“We’ll all be like that if we stay up here much longer,” grumbled a tall youth with an incipient mustache and a smear of grease across one cheek. “Say, where are we, anyhow, fellows? How much further is it to where we get off?”

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"About fifteen hundred miles," answered someone consolingly. "Or it was before we got blown all over the shop. Bet you we aren't any nearer Ireland than we were this time yesterday!"

"Thought we were going to Queenstown," said another.

"So we are, you chump. Where do you think Queenstown is?"

"France, of course! Isn't it?"

There was a laugh at that, and he was informed that unless Ireland had had another Big Wind Queenstown was still across the Channel from France. Nelson began to feel squirmy after awhile and, seeing that Martin was half-asleep, propped up against the bunk frame, he unobtrusively picked his way through the crowd, aware of surreptitious smiles, and made his way back to his bunk, narrowly missing a collision with the junior lieutenant on the way.

The next few hours were most unhappy ones for Nelson. He was just sick enough to be miserable, and for a long time his efforts to get to sleep were vain. He finally fell into a restless slumber, however, from which he was later awakened by a swirling and rushing of water beneath him, followed after a minute by a gurgling sound that proclaimed the main tanks filled. He waited

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for the engines to stop their racket, but, waiting, he fell asleep again, and when he next awoke the silence was for a moment quite startling.

“Down again,” he murmured comfortably.
“Fine! Nice and quiet!”

Then he really and truly went to sleep.

CHAPTER XIV

IN AN IRISH MIST

THE Q-4 slid down a long foam-patterned wave that hid the horizon behind, wallowed a moment in the green hollow and began her climb once more. Those seas were awe-inspiring, and Nelson, viewing them from a conning tower port, felt that the submarine was a ridiculously tiny thing to be afloat in. Even Martin, who had preceded him up the ladder, looked a bit serious as he raised his eyes to the crest of the next monster that came, towering far against a stormy gray sky, toward them as if to engulf the little craft. But the Q-4 kept on climbing, her decks aslant, until she seemed to hang motionless there between sky and water. Then, with a flirt of her tail, she was off again, coasting down for another wallow in the trough.

She had been doing that ever since the evening before when the peaceful quiet of the hundred foot depth had given place to the clatter and clang of surface steaming. The gale was a thing of the

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past, but the effect of it was still apparent in the monstrous seas that came charging out of the north-east. Once during the forenoon the sun had peered out for a brief moment from behind the wrack of leaden clouds, but now the world visible from the *Q-4* was gray and somber slatey-green. The other ships were not in sight, for each had fought the gale in its own way and set its own course, but the wireless had picked up one of the destroyers the night before. She had had her bow bent by a sea and lost a funnel, but was keeping on about sixty miles north. Later the *Q-4* got into communication with the flagship and with two submarines. Each reported having had a hard time of it. One of the smaller subs was believed to have been lost. (That, however, as they were to learn weeks later, was not so. She had submerged early in the trouble, but her batteries had been quickly exhausted and she had been forced to the surface again where for two days she had been tossed about and driven so far from her course that, engine trouble developing, she had limped in to Bermuda, by that time her nearest port!) The *Q-4* was doing eleven knots and had been putting the miles behind her at that speed ever since coming up, and, with the barometer acting reasonably there seemed a fair chance

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of reaching Queenstown in the course of another three days, for the *Q-4* had also got too far south.

Over Nelson's head, on the swaying bridge, the junior luff and a steersman were "taking her through." Here in the conning tower, behind the head-high ports, two lookouts were on duty, scanning the tumbling sea for "smoke, sail or periscope."

Nelson and Martin descended to the central station, the former, at least satisfied to exchange the uneasy tower-deck for the comparative calm of the torpedo compartment whither he accompanied Martin. He aided, or tried to aid, in the duty of inspecting the torpedoes and verifying the pressure in the air flasks, a daily proceeding. Afterwards he visited Clancy in the engine room and asked so many questions, having to shout to make himself heard, that the machinist's mate drove him forth with a wrench. Life aboard was quite sociable that evening, for there was a game of pitch in the forward quarters and a tow-headed electrician produced a mouth organ and played spiritedly, if out of tune, and all who could make any sort of a vocal sound tried to sing.

The next day dawned with a smoother sea, and at about six bells in the forenoon watch they

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sighted smoke and picked up the torpedo boat destroyer *Stacey*. They were in the German submarine zone and the watch became sharper than ever. Just before dark the main body of the flotilla was sighted and the next morning the *Q-4* was back with her companions, some of them showing effects of their struggles with the storm. Nelson learned that the *Gyandotte* was one of the gray shapes ahead and he wondered whether the captain would attempt to put him aboard her. He didn't quite see the possibility of it, nor did Martin, and the latter prophesied that Nelson would stay just where he was until they reached port, something that Nelson was glad enough to do. The junior lieutenant informed him that evening that they had reported his rescue to the *Gyandotte*, but that it wouldn't be advisable to attempt any transfer at present.

The flotilla was back in two-column formation by that time, with destroyers and cruisers forming a cordon about them, and in such order they steamed toward Cape Clear. The following day the lookouts on all the ships were kept perturbed and busy, for the sea was a graveyard thereabouts and the surface was fairly cluttered with wreckage. Scarce an hour passed that a floating cask or spar or hatch did not send the destroyer and

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cruiser gun crews to stations. About noon the Q-4 rode through a patch of oil nearly an acre in extent. They wanted to think that it was evidence of a destroyed German submarine, but the more likely explanation had to do with an Allied tanker sunk by mine or torpedo. Toward dusk general quarters was sounded on the Q-4 and the two deck guns were manned and the torpedo crew flew to their stations. For several minutes the supposed enemy submarine lay in plain sight against the sunset glow while the destroyers converged toward it, three and four-inch guns popping. Then they swung around and hurried back in disgust and as the signals wigwagged from ship to ship the officers on the Q-4's bridge chuckled. The submarine had proved to be a dead whale!

And that was as close to sighting a German U-boat as they came. For the last two nights of the run they traveled without even a stern light and scattered at dark to reassemble at the first streak of morning. Fastnet Light appeared off the port bow late that night and when day came, a misty, soft day, they were carefully picking their way through the mine fields, with the green hills of Ireland stretching alongside. And that afternoon they passed the Head and slowly slipped into

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Cork Harbor, dropping anchors at last under the slopes of Queenstown.

Back home they never heard of that voyage until long after, which perhaps is to be regretted, since the war developed few more courageous incidents than that twenty-five hundred mile run of United States submarines, many of which were but coastal boats and never meant for such a venture.

But, although they had all come through safely save one, each was in need of some repairs, inside or out, and the next morning they gathered about the mother ship like chickens about a clucking hen and the overhauling began. Nelson bade good-bye to Martin and to the rest of the *Q-4*'s men and returned to the *Gyandotte*, which had dropped her hooks nearly a mile below. Minus one funnel, she had a most reprehensible appearance. The officer of the deck shook his hand, something quite foreign to precedent, and for the subsequent hour Nelson was treated like a hero by the men below. He had to tell his story more than once and was glad when his shipmates began at last to lose interest in his exploit. Getting back to the freedom and spaciousness of the cruiser was rather pleasant, after the confinement of the *Q-4*, but he missed Martin Townsend and

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Somehow regretted the uncomfortable, happy-go-lucky existence he had left. Martin he was to see again soon, for all ships were destined to remain in port for a number of days, according to report, and they had planned to get liberty together.

Some of the ships began coaling the next morning, but, fortunately for Nelson, the *Gyandotte* was not of the number and his watch was given liberty. If you have never been through a week of such stress and anxiety as those aboard the *Gyandotte* you can't well imagine the positive joy of setting foot ashore once more. A quartermaster voiced the sentiment of all in Nelson's boat when, as it drew toward the landing, he remarked: "The best thing about going to sea is getting back on land, fellows." They all agreed to that. And they groaned derisively when the boatswain's mate in charge added: "Yeah, and the best thing about being ashore is getting back to your ship." It might be quite true, but it was untimely!

Nelson found Martin awaiting him, according to arrangement, at the little Y. M. C. A. hut which had just been erected as a temporary headquarters for the sailors, and they saw the town pretty thoroughly during the next two hours. In

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fact, they practically exhausted it long before the two hours were over, for Queenstown, although beautiful as to natural surroundings, holds in itself little of interest. The harbor, however, held plenty of action, for there were craft of all sorts, sizes and nationalities there, even including a German mine layer which had been brought in early in the war and was lying, a sad-looking hulk, on the flats near Haulbowline Island. At least, the tattered lounge who pointed her out to them said she was German, and as they wanted to think so they didn't seek corroboration. There was even a Portuguese destroyer in sight, a strangely-shaped craft that curved forward and aft until bow and stern sat low in the water. She had been streaked and spotted with grays and greens and blues until she was at once strange and elusive to the sight. Camouflaged hulls were fewer then than later and the British destroyers, of which there was one even then steaming slowly past Spike Island, were still unrelievedly black. A French chaser, however, had added pink to her other tones and looked like a nautical hummingbird or, possibly, a gay butterfly alighted on the water. The boys climbed the hill back of the town later and were well rewarded by the view that spread before them. Fortunately the sun was

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shining and they could see far out onto the channel southward and even locate Cork by the haze of smoke that lay in the northwest. Toward two o'clock they reached the town again and set out in search of dinner. They found it at last, but the least said of it the better. The only point in its favor that Nelson could think of was its price, and that was so ridiculous that he felt as though he had cheated the proprietor of the little water-front hotel.

They wrote letters that afternoon in the Y. M. C. A. hut, disputing a table with so many others that elbows knocked together. Nelson's brief epistle to his uncle was soon finished and then he wrote a longer letter to his relations in Boston and, finally, a shorter one to Billy Masters. After that he looked through a two-months-old American magazine and waited for Martin to finish "pouring his heart out." The expression is Nelson's. Perhaps he was a little bit envious. Having someone to write to, someone who really cared to hear from a chap, was pretty nice! Neither found letters from home, a fact which disturbed Martin more than it did his companion. Nelson pointed out, however, that American mail hadn't had time to reach Queenstown yet, and Martin felt better. They joined forces with nearly a dozen members

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of the *Q-4's* petty officers and crew and hired numerous carriages—only they called them cars there—and were driven around the island. It was an hilarious and rather noisy trip, for they were well through with a dangerous enterprise, the sun was shining, the Irish fields were tender green and they were young. Many a gossoon who had never been familiar with a United States coin before was richer by reason of that expedition. As Clancy remarked—for Clancy was along and led the singing: “There’s nothing in the stores worth buying and we’ve got to spend it somehow!”

Coming back they spied a baseball game going on and, emitting wild shrieks of approval, abandoned their equipages—paying the jarveys far more than was reasonable—and joined the spectators. Inquiry elicited the information that the contending nines represented an American destroyer and an American supply ship. Clancy learned which team was leading in the score and then, summoning his companions, began a vocal bombardment of that team which so surprised and distressed its pitcher that he added to the joy of nations by passing the next two batsmen and throwing an easy grounder over first baseman’s head. The game had reached the end of the

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seventh inning when the *Q-4's* rioters appeared and the score was 18 to 7 in favor of the destroyer's team, but Clancy rallied the neutrals, which included many amused British Tommies from the garrison, and conducted such a siege of cheering and raillery that the supply ship came through in the ninth with enough hits to win.

The destroyer team's catcher, a big two-handed Irish-American with flaming red hair and a belligerent disposition, took Clancy to task the instant he was free of his mask and protector and there ensued as pretty a little informal scrap as it had been the pleasure of the Britons to witness for some time. They were awfully appreciative, those Tommies, and did everything in their power to make the affair a success, even to joining hands and establishing a ring. A red-cheeked sergeant took charge of proceedings and appointed himself referee and everything went off very nicely indeed. They found six rounds before the destroyer "gob" took the count, during which it was give-and-take all the way, with some really scientific work by both men. Clancy looked a bit the worse for wear at the end of the battle, but he had the satisfaction of knowing that this opponent looked a sight more disreputable. Subsequently the late foes shook hands quite amicably,

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and principals, seconds and spectators returned to the town in the finest of spirits, Briton and American fraternizing in a fashion almost touching.

Despairing of finding a supper fit for persons of their refinement and condition of hunger, Martin and Nelson called it a day and returned to their respective ships, agreeing to meet again at the first opportunity.

The opportunity didn't occur until the second day later, for the *Gyandotte* filled her bunkers and Nelson's presence was necessary on board. The captain didn't put it in those words, of course. In fact, he didn't say anything about it. The order was "Coal ship," and you knew what that meant without being told, and knew that your chance of getting ashore was just about as bright as a lighted candle's in a gale of wind. The *Gyandotte* tried for a record that day, but failed by a matter of six minutes, and there was subsequent gloom that was dispelled only when soap and water had removed the signs of toil and "chow" had refreshed the inner man. The next day the task of painting fell to the other hands and Nelson again spread himself luxuriously on a thwart of the first boat bearing the liberty party to shore. Martin failed to show up until almost noon, however, and Nelson passed rather a dull morning.

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He read all the newspapers and magazines he could get his hands on at the hut and mailed three picture postcards, and after that strolled along the one main street of the town and wondered whether any of the citizens of Queenstown ever did any work. So far as he could see most of the inhabitants were holding up the fronts of the buildings along the water! He yielded to the blandishments of four beggars, tried to understand the tearful tale of a stranded Norwegian sailor, bought some butterscotch and got his jaws stuck so firmly together that he feared he would have to seek the aid of a surgeon, and then literally walked into the arms of Martin.

"Hello, Nep," laughed the latter, releasing him. "Lost your eyesight?"

"Nobagamatetutugada," replied Nelson earnestly.

"Come again, please!"

"Ihaylgamate——"

"Yes, I understand that," said Martin gravely, "but what happened after the torpedo struck?"

Nelson seized him by the arm, in desperation, and started him up the hill.

"Oh, I see," jabbered the other. "You've hidden the corpse on top of the hill, eh? Better look back and see if we're followed, Nep. The last

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time I got mixed up in a crime of this sort I was electrocuted."

"Dobesiechum," expostulated Nelson impatiently. "Hapiesef." He drew the bag of butterscotch from his pocket and held it forth. Martin viewed it suspiciously.

"Yes, I'm quite happy, thanks, but I don't think I want to eat any of that stuff. What is it?"

"Buherhoct."

"Indeed? Has it any other name? Let's look at it. Oh, I get you, Nep. It's butterscotch. Why didn't you say so?"

"Idi!"

"Not at all, old scout. You said something that sounded like a giraffe blowing bubbles. No, thanks, Nep. You may be stuck on that stuff, but I'm not, and don't intend to be. Is there any hope for you? Or do you remain stuck-up and inarticulate all day?"

"Iamin," responded Nelson hopefully.

"Iamin, eh? Think of that? Why, I used to know him. Nice chap, too. Say, where are you taking me? I don't want to go and see that castle or monastery or whatever it is up there. Let's look for a movie show."

Nelson freed his jaws by a final, despairing

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effort and after an agonized period of suspense deposited a lump of butterscotch on someone's doorframe.

"Hang the stuff!" he exclaimed ruefully. "I've nearly broken my jaws with it. Wonder what sort of glue they put into it. Someone could make his fortune if he could find out. Gee, but my mouth aches!"

"What are you going to do with the rest of it?" inquired Martin.

"Throw it away as far as——"

"Wait a bit! Don't be wasteful, Nep. I know something better. We'll go back to Main Street or Prairie Boulevard or whatever they call that causeway down there and drop it along the pavement. Then we'll wait until it gets nice and soft and make a lot of money prying folks loose."

But Nelson didn't think the scheme practical and so they compromised by laying the bag on a doorsill and hurrying off before they could be caught and made to take it back.

The south of Ireland has a delightful climate if you don't mind being a bit damp. The sun disappeared behind a fog bank about noon and when they emerged from dinner—they had taken advice and been rewarded by a well-cooked meal—it was raining. At least, they called it rain, but

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the inhabitants spoke of it as a mist. Whatever it was, it made them wish they had their rubber coats. They retired to the Y. M. C. A. hut to wait for it to stop, but it showed no intention of doing anything so obliging, and so, after awhile, finding the hut deficient in excitement, they metaphorically shrugged damp shoulders and swaggered forth again. Perhaps it would have been as well if they hadn't, as things turned out. Or perhaps, on the other hand, it was fortunate that they did. It all depends on how you look at it.

CHAPTER XV

THE MYSTERIOUS SIGNALS

AN hour later they found themselves getting ashore on the farther side of the harbor in a dense mist. By now they had acquired a comfortable philosophy that took no account of dampness. They had hired a small boat that leaked cheerfully every minute and their feet were as wet as their noses, and the latter were dripping all the time. As one place was as good as another to two boys seeking adventure they had only attempted to keep from running into the sinking one of the numerous ships that dotted the channels. Just where they were, now that they had landed and pulled the boat up, was something they neither knew nor cared about. They could see about fifty feet ahead of them, which, as Martin pointed out, was quite sufficient to keep them from traffic dangers. After leaving the beach they crossed a field, pausing to read an interesting "No trespassing" sign, and came to a road. It wasn't a bad road as south of Ireland

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roads go, but it looked uninteresting. So they disregarded it and broke through a hedge on the other side of it and walked into a bog.

Five minutes afterwards they were out again, their feet *squishing* musically in their shoes. It seemed to them intensely funny, and they laughed hilariously over their plight and tried to see who could make the more pleasing *squishes*. Martin ventured the opinion that it was one of the justly celebrated peat-bogs, which drew Nelson to murmur: "For the love of peat!" Beyond the bog—they had gone straight across it in spite of its tenacity—was a field that climbed upward through the fog, ending always fifty feet ahead. The danger of walking off into a railway cut or into the sea added excitement. That the sea was not far distant was evident from the salt tang in the air. They ultimately reached the summit of the hill and made out the shape of a small building which proved to be a tumbled-down cabin. There was nothing inside save a litter of stone and rubbish and the roof was gone except in one corner. Weeds and grass grew from the crevices, and Martin observed that it was without doubt extremely picturesque, and that if he had his camera with him he would snap it, but that as a place of sanctuary it was a fizzle. Nelson pointed out the

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remains of a fireplace and chimney, but there was nothing in sight that looked like fuel, and, as Martin said, they hadn't brought away enough of the peat-bog to make much of a fire. So they went on again, unhurriedly, happily, hands in pockets and shoulders humped to keep the fog from trickling down their necks. After ten or fifteen minutes, during which they were twice turned back by a hedge and a ditch, it dawned on them that they were quite as thoroughly lost as any collar button that ever rolled under a bureau!

Whereupon they clutched each other tightly and laughed long and loud!

Martin presently looked at his watch and, having recovered a degree of sobriety, announced the hour as half-past four. That struck Nelson as being very, very comical, and he began to laugh all over again. Martin called him a silly ass and said it was a good thing it wasn't twelve o'clock, since in that case Nelson would probably have hysterics.

I might give a detailed account of what transpired during the next four hours, but you would find it tiresome, although not so tiresome as they did! Briefly, though, let me tell you that they tried to find, first of all, the tumble-down hut, in which they failed utterly, and that they subse-

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quently put the coast behind them, according to their calculations, and set out for the harbor, in the hope that they would either find the boat they had rowed across in or, failing that, some other means of transportation. They got thoroughly wet and a trifle shivery, as night drew near, but they didn't find the shore of the harbor. They simply couldn't find anything! They were fairly certain that not far away in more than one direction lay villages, or, at least, dwellings, but Fate guided their footsteps so carefully that not the slightest sign of a habitation rewarded them. As Martin grumbled—for they reached the grumbling stage eventually—if they had committed murder and were trying to keep away from folks they'd probably bump into a house every fifty yards!

When darkness came, earlier because of the mist which grew heavier as time went on, they did at last reach a shore, but it wasn't the harbor that lay before them. There were rocks and no sign of a beach save at infrequent intervals where the ledges broke apart, and the big waves that roared against those stone battlements were straight from the Atlantic. So, of course, what they had done was to cross the headland, a matter of a full five miles, keeping in a direction quite contrary to the

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one sought, which, in fog or darkness, is exactly what one is most likely to do. They knew that to their right was the entrance to the harbor, with a lighthouse on a point, but how far away it might be there was no telling. What lay along the shore in the other direction they didn't know. Consequently they turned westward, toward the light. The night was not cold, but here on the cliffs a chill breath from the ocean penetrated their saturated clothing, sent shivers up and down their backs and set their teeth chattering. Perhaps if they had been able to walk briskly they could have kept warm, but when one doesn't know whether the next step is to drop him over the edge of a cliff, walking briskly is not advisable. They went on, making what progress they might, trying to keep the feel of the turf underfoot, but frequently finding themselves stumbling over the bare surface of the ledges. They were doing but little talking now and had quite forgotten for the time how to laugh. They were miserably hungry, and when Nelson spoke feelingly out of the darkness of a cup of hot coffee Martin threatened to throw him over the cliff if he didn't stop. There is no saying how fast they traveled, but I think that if they covered a quarter of a mile of that going in a half-hour they did well. It was close

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on nine when Martin looked at the faintly illuminated dial of his wrist watch for the last time. They were then in the lee of a rock which for the moment disputed their path, and they had paused to regain their breaths before finding their way around it. And it was at that moment of panting silence that they saw the light.

It flashed forth suddenly below them as though in the water: once—twice—three times, and disappeared. So surprised were they that it was not until its faint rays had gone that Martin opened his mouth to hail. That only a sort of gasp issued was due to the fact that his companion laid a warning clutch on his arm.

"Wait!" whispered Nelson. "Don't shout!"

"Why not? It's a boat, you chump!" But Martin dropped his voice to match Nelson's.

"I know, but what's it doing? Let's wait a minute, Mart, and find out. The light wasn't directed toward us, but out to sea, and—Look!"

Very faintly an answering beacon glimmered through the mist: once and again.

"Well, that doesn't prove anything, does it?" asked Martin impatiently. "What's the big idea? Maybe you think it's the German Navy come to take Ireland?"

"I don't know what it is," responded Nelson

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cautiously, "but when you see lights flashing along the shore these days it's a good plan to keep your eyes peeled."

"Probably a Coast Guard or a—a—look here, we don't want to spend the night on this forsaken place, Nep. That fellow, whoever he is, has a boat, and even if he won't take us off he can probably tell us how to find a village."

"I don't think the light down there was in a boat," said Nelson. "I think there's a bit of beach there. A boat where that light was would be right in the surf. Listen, Mart. We're farther from the water than we were."

"Yes, but——" Martin began querulously, but stopped. After a moment he went on in a different tone. "Maybe you're right, Nep," he said softly. "Come on and let's see where we are, first of all."

They crept gingerly in the direction of the first light, testing each step for fear that they might reach the edge of the cliff too suddenly. Low bushes took the place of the sod, and small stones impeded their uncertain steps. After a minute they stopped abruptly, for, below them and nearer now, the first light they had glimpsed was again flashing its message into the mist and gloom. Three times it showed and then went out. The

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boys waited. Moments passed and no answering beacon appeared at sea. Then, when they had almost reached the conclusion that they had imagined that first reply, two dim flashes lit the darkness.

"It's much nearer," whispered Mart.

"Yes, and that light down here is from a lantern on the beach. It looks queer to me, Mart."

"Sure it's queer! It's some funny business that we've got to find out about, old man. Flop down on your tummy and crawl out to the edge, but be careful and don't make a row. Come on."

The edge was much farther than they had thought, and long before they had reached it they were wriggling down a slope of worn ledge, fissured and broken, that was extremely detrimental to clothing. Mart found the edge first when his exploring hand failed to touch anything ahead of him and he gave a warning whisper. Lying on their stomachs with their heads close together they exchanged impressions.

"The beach can't be more than twenty feet down," whispered Nelson. "I think I heard the chap with the lantern a second ago."

"Someone's trying to make a landing," said Martin, "and that light is to guide him. What

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gets me is how they'd dare show a light if everything wasn't—well, all right."

"Why? Who's to see it a night like this? None of the patrol boats would be near enough to catch even a glimpse of it. Light doesn't travel far in a mist of this sort."

"Right-o! I suppose they chose tonight on purpose, eh? What'll we do now?"

"I guess we can't do anything but wait and watch. If we could—Listen! Oars!"

Oars, indeed, and quite distinct in a muffled way, oars rattling and creaking against row-locks or thole-pins and becoming louder each instant. A faint sound came from almost below them, as though the watcher on the beach had kicked a stone in moving. Then the lantern appeared once more and swung back and forth several times, moving slowly away from the cliff as the bearer approached the edge of the surf.

"Gee, this is exciting!" murmured Martin. "Say, it would help a bit if we had our automatics with us, wouldn't it? We might capture a German landing-party!"

"I don't think they're Germans," said Nelson thoughtfully, his voice no more than a whisper. "Not even a German sub would dare come so close."

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"It might be 'Kelly,'" suggested Martin.

"Who's 'Kelly'?"

"Haven't you heard about him? He's a German submarine commander who does all sorts of stunts, if you believe what you hear, like landing on the coast hereabouts once and going into Cork and living there a couple of days. And he leaves messages tacked on the Channel buoys, they say. Of course it's probably all yarns. That boat's pretty close to the surf, Nep."

They listened in silence a moment. Then Nelson said: "I think they're probably Irish rebels; Sinn Feiners, don't they call them?"

"Oh, that's all over with, I guess. Besides, what would they be doing in a boat off-shore?"

"Landing rifles or ammunition, or both," responded the other. "I don't believe that trouble is all over, either, Mart. They threw stones at our sailors in Cork only a few weeks ago."

"At our men? What for?" asked Martin in an indignant whisper.

"Because we're fighting the Germans, and the Sinn Feiners are pro-German, or pro-anything that'll make trouble for England. There they come!"

From below came the sound of a boat's keel grating on the sand, and the unmistakable tramp

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of feet within it, followed by a splashing noise as someone leaped out and guided the bow out of water. After that the silence was over. Low voices murmured. Feet scuffled softly on sand or shingle. Although they could see nothing, their imaginations pictured the busy scene below: men, perhaps a half-dozen all told, bearing burdens from boat to shore, splashing through the ripples, grinding over the shingle, disappearing somewhere beneath, perhaps into a cave. The old tales of smuggling in the British Isles returned to memory and they had visions of a great, high cavern running back from the edge of the beach, a cavern piled with mysterious boxes and bales. But the cavern theory was quickly dissipated, for of a sudden footsteps sounded near at hand and they heard the labored breathing of men as they made their way up some unseen pass from below, and, once, a muttered exclamation and the trickling fall of a dislodged stone. It seemed to the boys that the men must be almost upon them, and they prepared themselves for flight, but the footsteps crunched past a dozen feet away and became soundless as they reached the rough turf of the summit. Then others followed. Whatever the burdens were that they bore up the cliff they must have been fairly heavy, for breathing was labored and the

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scuffling sound of the booted feet suggested that they labored under considerable weight.

For a number of minutes Nelson and Martin lay and listened, and in that time, they gathered, three loads were brought up, and the first bearers began their descent again. Now and then a low word was spoken, but the hearers failed to gather the sense of it. Martin tugged at Nelson's sleeve.

"Listen for the last of them to go back," he whispered. "Then follow me and we'll see where they're taking the stuff. Better keep in touch so we won't get lost. Ready now?"

They crept back from the edge and then, arising to their feet, left the cliff behind and made their way as quietly as possible into the darkness. When they had gone some thirty yards or so Martin drew Nelson down beside him. "We'll wait here until they come back," he said. "Maybe we can hear where they go."

"Hope we aren't in their way," whispered Nelson. "Hate to have them walk on me."

"If they do, don't move. Just make a noise like a shamrock!" Martin chuckled softly. "Say, Nep, I haven't had so much fun since I ran a nail in my foot! Where do you suppose they're caching the stuff?"

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“Can’t imagine unless—Ssh! They’re coming up again!”

Whether the mist grew momentarily thinner or whether his sight had grown more accustomed to the darkness Nelson didn’t know, but a second later he caught a dim vision of two shapes appearing above the cliff’s edge. The vision was instantly lost, however, and they had only the sounds to guide them. The men seemed to be bearing to their left, and after an instant Martin tugged at Nelson and they skirmished in that direction. Once Nelson tripped over something and sprawled on his hands and knees, and Martin fell to the ground beside him and they kept very still for a minute. But if Nelson had made any noise it had gone unnoted by the men, for the boys could still hear them ahead there. Once there came the unmistakable sound of a heavy object dropping with a jarring thud onto a wooden surface.

“Boxes,” whispered Nelson. “They’re piling them up over there.”

“We might fill our pockets with them and beat it,” suggested Martin. “Think they’ve gone back yet?”

“I don’t know. Listen. Hear anything?”

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"No. Come on and let's get to the bottom of this."

Once more they crept forward. The ground was rough now, interspersed with tiny bushes, and they had to feel their way cautiously to avoid noise. Suddenly Martin, slightly in the lead, stumbled down a little bank, repressing an exclamation of surprise, and felt wheel ruts underfoot. With a low warning to his companion he peered intently into the enshrouding gloom. Was it imagination or did the darkness loom more black? Cautiously, with outstretched hands, he moved forward. Then his fingers brushed a chill, damp surface and a dim shape took form before him.

"Back up!" he cautioned. "We've got it! It's—great Scott, it's a wagon! You listen for them, Nep, and I'll feel around a bit. Hear anything? We'll have to drop if they come. Whoa, boy!" Nelson heard his friend whispering as he drew away. There was a jingle of harness, such a sound as a horse might cause by tossing his head. Meanwhile Nelson's hands were passing enquiringly over the vehicle. He made out a big, wide-tired wheel, the body, a cloth top stretching upward from it, and then, moving a pace, the lowered tailboard and the face of a

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box lying at one side of the wagon bed. At that moment Martin stepped back to his side.

"It's a covered wagon," he whispered, "with two horses. They've got them anchored with a cobblestone as big as your head. I cut the cable, though."

"What for?" asked Nelson.

Martin chuckled, but his explanation had to wait, for the men were coming back again and there was just time for the two boys to reach the farther side of the wagon and drop to the earth before the leaders lurched to the back.

"One, two—heave!" said a voice, and there was a jar as another box landed. Then someone scrambled inside and the box was pushed into place. Other steps shuffled up and the performance was repeated. Then:

"How many more are there, Petey?" asked a voice.

"Two more. By the Saints, boys, it's broke entirely me back is."

"Don't talk so loud, you! Sure, there's other backs here. Stand aside there. Aisy now, boys! No noise!"

A third burden was deposited and shoved into place. "Is that the last?" one of the men asked.

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"It is not. I'm wishin' it was. There's two more down below."

"Let Mike carry them, then. I'm through."

"Is that so? You'll take your end, just the same, my lad." The speaker sounded authoritative. "Come on now and get it through."

They turned back along the path and low voices and footsteps dwindled to silence. For a minute only the occasional drip of the moisture from the wagon broke the stillness. Then one of the horses pawed impatiently at the ground and Martin sprang to action.

"Come on!" he whispered. "Here's where we take a drive!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Nelson hoarsely.

"Put your foot on the hub and climb in. Whoa, boys! Easy now! Are you in?"

"Yes, but——"

"We're off! Get ap, Jehosophat!" The wagon creaked, Nelson collided with something extremely hard behind him and they went lurching off through the darkness.

CHAPTER XVI

THROUGH THE NIGHT

BUT, look here, Mart! How the dickens will you know where to go? I don't believe this is a real road we're on!"

"Give 'em their heads, old scout: that's the only way. Every nag knows how to get home. All we've got to do is hold on and——" Just then a wheel struck a rock and nearly threw them out. "And still hold on," ended Martin, with a laugh.

"They'll be after us in a shake," said Nelson pessimistically.

"A fat chance of finding us they'll have! Just as soon as we get on asphalt I'll touch 'em up. Feel a whip anywhere?"

"Asphalt! Where do you think you are? Fifth Avenue, New York?"

"Feels like it now and then," chuckled Mart. "Get ap, Bones! Say, wouldn't it be funny if it was dynamite we had in there behind?"

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Nelson jumped. "Gee! Do you suppose it is?"

"Might be," was the cheerful reply. "How about that whip?"

"I don't find one."

"Never mind. It probably wouldn't do any good, anyway." For a minute or more they thumped and swayed over the road, if road it was, without further speech. Nelson tried to listen for sounds of pursuit, but the creaking of the wheels and the straining of the wagon prevented. Then Martin laughed softly beside him. "Say, won't they be surprised when they get back and don't find it?" he asked. "Can't you just picture them stumbling around in the dark? They'll think at first that they've missed the place. Then they'll conclude that the horses have moved off a bit. Oh, they'll have a jolly time of it!"

"They'll follow us, of course," said Nelson. "Don't you suppose they can hear this old thing rumbling and squeaking a mile away?"

"That's so! I hadn't thought of that! Well, we'll give them a run for their money, anyhow. Get up, Roger! Get up, Queen Bess! Say, what do they call horses in Ireland?"

"Pat and Mike, I guess." Nelson put an uneasy head around the side of the wagon, but, ex-

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cept that a sudden lurch brought his ear in violent contact with a piece of wood, nothing resulted. At that moment the horses turned to the right, the front wheels jarred down a little declivity and the wagon began to move faster.

"Ata boy!" approved Martin. "Some speed to these nags, what? Blessed if they aren't actually trotting! Or were," he added with less enthusiasm as the horses dropped to a walk again. "Get ap, consarn ye! Wish to goodness I had a whip! Or a stick of dynamite!"

"Open one of the cases in there," suggested Nelson dryly.

"It would be an awful joke on us if those same cases held canned tomatoes or some silly thing like that! Think of opening them and finding a lot of 'Sinn Fein Brand Early June Peas'!"

"They're rifles, I think," said Nelson. "The cases felt sort of long and narrow. As I make it out, those folks in the boat came from some schooner anchored out beyond there. The man with the lantern was the fellow who brought this wagon. Maybe there were two of him. What I can't see is what he expected to do with the stuff. He wouldn't dare take it into the town."

"Couldn't unless he swam it across the harbor."

"That's so. Or unless he drove all the way

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around to Midleton and went in by the road over the bridges. There's a way to the mainland there, you know."

"No, I didn't know it. I thought Queenstown was on an island."

"So it is, but I said bridges, didn't I?"

"Well, don't get huffy about it. I suppose this stuff was going to someone's house or barn or hay-mow tonight. Then, later, they'd take it up to Cork or Dublin or somewhere. Well, their plans are all shot to pieces, Nep."

"Unless they catch us in the next half-hour," replied Nelson gloomily. "Won't those nags go any faster?"

"I'll ask them. Can you accelerate your pace any, horsies? Get ap, you Sinn Feiners!"

Strangely enough that epithet had an effect and the horses broke into a lumbering trot. The road was fairly good now and Martin was careful to offer no suggestions to the nags. They kept the trot up for a quarter of a mile or so before relapsing again into their leisurely walk. By that time Nelson was breathing easier and it seemed to him that they might, after all, elude pursuit.

"How far is it around to Queenstown by this road you tell of?" asked Martin presently. Nelson tried to conjure up the map in the guide book

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he had bought the first day ashore but with poor success. He had to own at last that he hadn't any idea.

"Well, ten miles? Twenty? Fifty?"

"I suppose about twenty," he said doubtfully. Martin whistled softly and expressively, and peered at his watch.

"It's a little after nine-thirty," he mused. "At the rate we're going we ought to get there about five in the morning—if the horses don't die first!"

"Why go into Queenstown, then?" asked Nelson. "We're bound to find a village pretty soon. Anyhow, there's Midleton."

"How far's that?"

"About halfway, I guess."

"Well——" Martin was silent a minute. Then: "I tell you what we'll do, Nep. We're in wrong anyhow for out-staying liberty, and we might as well be hung for sheep as for lambs. We'll find this Midleton place you tell about and be sure we're headed right. Then we'll stop and have a few hours' sleep and drive into Queenstown in the morning in triumph. What do you say?"

"Sounds crazy to me," objected Nelson. "All except the sleep part of it. That sounds mighty reasonable. But of course what'll happen is that

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we'll be arrested for carrying rifles around the country without a license, or whatever you have to have. I want some sleep, but I don't care to take it in jail!"

"We'll have to risk that," said Martin. "Besides, we're American sailors and if they arrest us we'll threaten to tell Mr. Wilson. Say, am I dippy, or is that a light ahead there?"

"Both, I guess. Anyway, it's a light." Nelson was beginning to regain his cheerfulness. "But we'd better not stop anywhere just yet, Mart. Those fellows might persuade folks that we'd stolen their team."

"The very idea! Do we look like fellows who would steal?"

"I can't see what we look like, but I have a strong suspicion that we do. Also murder. I know my trousers are torn on both knees, and they're my best ones, too, by the way, and I'm pretty certain that I'm wet and dirty and generally hoboish. I'd rather not have any traffic with a cop, Mart."

"Maybe you're right. Appearances are sometimes deceitful. Anyhow, I guess that's only a house, that light. Probably a farm. We aren't going very near it."

The light, a dim glimmer through some trees,

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was passed on the left and the wagon trundled on, Martin at intervals prevailing on his mettlesome steeds to attempt a gait slightly faster than a walk. The mist wasn't quite so thick inland here, but it continued to be extremely wet and they were both shivering. It was Nelson who proposed getting down and walking for awhile to get warm.

"Good idea," said Martin with approval. "Maybe lightening the load will encourage Shamrock and St. Peter there. It would be awful if they ran away, though."

"I'd be quite as well satisfied," sighed Nelson. "The whole thing is a silly business, anyway. I wish we'd minded our own affairs!"

"Who was it proposed spying on those poor, inoffensive Sinn Feiners first?" demanded Martin indignantly. "I'd have shouted to them and——"

"Got cracked on the head. Sure! I saved you from that, anyway, but it wasn't my idea to spend the night creaking around Ireland in a prairie schooner."

"Guess it looks more like a butcher's cart, Nep. I say, if we only could get something to eat! Why not? There must be food somewhere in this lovely but benighted land. When we strike a village I'll forage. Gee, I feel better already!"

The village didn't materialize, though, for

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more than an hour, by which time they were back on the seat again and Nelson was frankly asleep. It was a tiny hamlet, at that, and few lights showed. They drove creaking through it, barked at by two dogs, and halted on the further side. Then Martin got stiffly down and went back while Nelson held the lines and tried to keep himself awake. Martin returned empty-handed after ten minutes or so.

"A beautifully hospitable place," he said bitterly. "I tried five houses and at each one they threatened to have me arrested if I didn't go away. I didn't get a bite, but one of those dogs did—very nearly." He rubbed an ankle as he climbed back into his place. "Get up, you handsome brutes! Here, you take the lines awhile, Nep, and let me have a nap. Wake me if we come to an all-night lunch!"

Martin yielded the reins and leaned against his side of the wagon and was soon snoring. Nelson, blinking to keep his eyes open, slouched sleepily in his seat with loose lines. Once he was startled by the sound of a vehicle coming from ahead in the gloom, the first they had met, and pulled the reins hurriedly to make room for it to pass. Perhaps the lines were crossed and he steered the horses toward the center of the road. At all

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events, there was a sound of colliding hubs followed by a fine collection of oaths delivered in a rich Irish brogue. Nelson was much too sleepy to offer apology or explanation and the unknown but eloquent traveler rattled on into the night, complimentary to the last.

Shortly after midnight they rumbled across a bridge and onto the cobbles of a fair-sized village. By now it was possible to see the horses' heads and a corresponding distance on all sides and Nelson awoke Martin from his slumber. The town seemed utterly dark and deserted until, presently, the street on which they traveled turned abruptly and a lantern above a doorway confronted them with the startling legend: "Police." Beyond it a few lights showed dimly in another building and from somewhere in the darkness further away a train was being shunted along a track. Martin viewed the police station doubtfully and went past. The next collection of lights came from the lower floor of a small hotel. It didn't look very hospitable, but nevertheless Martin stopped the horses—he experienced no difficulty—climbed down and disappeared from sight. Nelson heard a door open and close. He lolled on the seat and nodded in the faint radiance of

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the lighted windows. After an interminable time Martin returned.

"Nothing doing," he said gruffly, climbing back. "The old geezer wanted to fight me for waking him up. Nothing to eat until the kitchen opens at five-thirty in the morning. Didn't even invite me to wait."

"I don't care," groaned Nelson. "I've lost interest in food. But couldn't we get beds in there?"

"Maybe, but I wouldn't patronize his old den, anyway. We'll find a place along the road and turn in and go to sleep with the dynamite. Get ap, horses!"

The horses awoke, sighed loudly and settled against the harness again and the wagon rumbled on through the silent, darkened streets.

CHAPTER XVII

BOYS IN KHAKI

JUST as the sun broke forth from the bank of mist that trailed its gray banners along the hillsides to the east a squeaking wagon, drawn by a pair of thin, decrepit looking white horses and occupied by two youths in what remained of the blue uniforms of United States sailors, drew up in front of police headquarters in Queenstown. It was too early for many of the citizens to be abroad, although here and there a sleepy pedestrian cast a vacantly curious stare at the odd apparition. From the seat one of the occupants yielded the frayed lines and got down stiffly, disappearing into the station. Those few early persons who paused to witness subsequent events were forced to wait for a good ten minutes. Then the youth in sailor togs, whose left sleeve bore an eagle above crossed cannons, done in white, and a single scarlet chevron below, emerged once more in company with two stalwart "Bobbies." A hasty glance into the back of the wagon, and

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the jaded horses were again started and the whole outfit disappeared behind the gates and was lost to view of the curious observers.

Five minutes later a police sergeant was very gingerly introducing a chisel under the lid of the nearest box on the wagon. The sergeant looked a bit unhappy, for Martin had innocently advanced the possibility of the cases containing explosives. At each *creak* of the lid as it gave to the chisel the sergeant flinched perceptibly, while his companion edged the fraction of an inch further into the background. Even Nelson was none too certain that a nice collection of dynamite bombs or guncotton cylinders was not about to reward their investigation. But in a moment a sigh of relief went up from the sergeant as the lid gave at last and revealed the contents.

"Guns!" he said devoutly.

And guns they were, rifles, neatly nested between much excelsior, with wicked looking sights of a sort quite new to either of the boys if not to the sergeant.

"Ha! German! Cast your eye on 'em, Flaherty! What do you say to that now? The murderin' rascallions! 'Twas to Dublin they was meanin' to take 'em, mark my words, Flaherty! It's the Sinn Feiners as landed 'em and

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that divil of a Rosmoyn crowd that was handlin' 'em. If them horses didn't have their last feed forninst the Two Rocks I'll eat me hat. Un-hitch 'em, Flaherty, an' put 'em in the stable till the Captain comes on an' tells us what'll we do with 'em. You gentlemen will wait an' give your evidence, please. Step inside, sirs."

"That's all well enough," objected Nelson, "but we're hungry. We haven't had anything to eat since yesterday noon. We'll get our breakfasts and be back in half an hour."

But the sergeant was adamant. They must await the appearance of the captain who was due in another twenty minutes. So, with sighs, they preceded their captor up the steps and into the bare office inside where, for the subsequent twenty or twenty-five minutes, they stifled the demands of two healthy hungers and impatiently awaited the advent of the police captain. The sergeant and the other officer, who appeared to be an ordinary constable, although he exuded so much dignity that the boys were in doubt as to that, were inclined to be chatty but found little encouragement from their guests.

In the course of time, following the arrival of several constables who dribbled in at intervals and had to hear the story of the capture from the

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sergeant, the captain himself at last materialized. He proved to be a slight, wistful looking man with a Cockney accent and a manner at once apologetic and suspicious. The boys' troubles began the moment the sergeant had finished his story. The captain bent a mild blue eye on them and announced sadly: "Wotever you sy will be used agynst you, my men." At least, that is what Martin always stoutly averred that he said. Nelson thinks he phrased it slightly differently.

However, nothing was used against them, so it didn't matter. The captain asked them so many questions that they were almost dizzy—although lack of food may have had something to do with it—and wrote every answer down slowly, sadly, laboriously. They had to delve into the ancient history to satisfy that official and reveal their ancestors as far back as the third generation, and tell their religious beliefs, political predilections and ethical standards. At last they were allowed to stagger forth, although they were severely informed that it would be their duty to hold themselves in readiness at all times to answer further questions.

If ever food tasted better than it did that morning neither of the boys was able to remember the occasion. They ate until it was necessary

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to slump down and sit on their spines, until even the cheerful and untidy waitress viewed them apprehensively. After a long, dreamy half hour over the empty coffee cups they arose, paid their scores and made for the landing and the ships to face the music.

Reaching the *Gyandotte*, Nelson reported to the officer of the deck and hurried below to change his togs before he was sent for to face the first lieutenant. That proved less of an ordeal than he feared, for his straightforward story, strange as it was, carried conviction and even brought more than one fleeting smile to the officer's face. "I'll look into the story, Troy," was the decision, "and if I find it's just as you've told it you'll hear no more. Hereafter, however, see that you keep close enough to the ship so that weather conditions won't get you into trouble. Frustrating Feinians is all very well in a way, Troy, but you aren't here for that."

In the afternoon the Chief Constable, although that might not have been his real title, came aboard in company with two minor officials and Nelson had to go through his story again. This time he was made to feel somewhat less like a criminal. In fact, the Chief intimated that he and Martin had displayed wit and courage, and seemed

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inclined to be a trifle grateful; which, considering that they had captured more than a hundred rifles, Nelson secretly thought appropriate. There were most sensational if extremely vague stories in the newspapers in which Martin's name was "Townser" and Nelson's "Tory." That ended the incident, so far as they were concerned. What ultimately became of the white horses, which had so faithfully performed their duty that night, and the creaking wagon, they never learned. They met only once more during the stay at Queens-town, and on that occasion their liberties barely overlapped, and they were together but an hour or so. The next day the submarine flotilla slid quietly out of the harbor, with the old mother ship wobbling along behind, and were soon out of sight around Roche's Point. On the *Gyandotte* it was rumored that they were to go up to the north coast of Scotland and join the British submarines on guard there, but no one knew for certain. There were a great many things concerning the movements of ships that one didn't know in those days.

Nelson missed Martin horribly at first, and was a bit mopey as long as the old *Gyandotte* stayed at the base. Fortunately for his spirits, that wasn't long. She followed the submarines through the

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booms just two days later, picking her way between anchored mines as daintily as any fine lady avoiding mud puddles, and, wigwagging a last signal to the forts, headed south. Nelson saw the hills of Queenstown fade into the brown and purple shadows of evening and finally disappear. Later the cruiser altered her course and in the first full darkness the light of Fastnet flashed at them from starboard. Nelson slept finely that night, for the *Gyandotte* rolled comfortably and creaked and rubbed her seams and was quite home-like again.

In the morning they were out of sight of land, lounging over a calm gray-blue sea in company with three destroyers. At daylight the four ships scuttled into line and held a deal of conversation by means of gay signal flags. The lookouts had hourly spasms, for that summer the waters around Great Britain and France for three hundred miles away from the coasts were thick with floating débris, and, with sufficient imagination on the part of the lookout, an empty lard pail makes an excellent periscope a mile away, while an abandoned mattress at two miles is as fine a conning tower for practice purposes as soul could desire. Those destroyers were new at the game and filled with enthusiasm, and half a dozen times that day

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the sharp bark of three-inch or four-in guns added to the joy of life. When it wasn't inanimate wreckage that made a lookout gasp and shout incoherently it was a porpoise. A porpoise appearing suddenly near the bow suggests just one thing in the world, and it isn't "Porpoise!" It's "Torpedo!" The *Gyandotte* was theoretically blown to bits at least five times that day by playful porpoises! What distressed the *Gyandotte's* secondary battery crews was that while the destroyers were forever letting fly at something, or, at least, preparing to, the *Gyandotte's* place at number three in the formation presupposed her to be safely guarded and gave no excuse for potting mythical periscopes.

That was a wonderful day, though. Aside from imitation U-boats, there was other excitement. Once they sighted and bore down on a big four-masted schooner from which trailed a long veil of black smoke. One of the destroyers slipped out of column and had speech with the schooner and later reported to the cruiser: "American ship *Annie B. Wells*, Baltimore, in cargo. Struck a mine yesterday evening and started a fire in some turpentine casks. Says she has fire under control and will be able to make Havre without assistance."

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Later two mine sweepers wallowed along under convoy of a diminutive chaser painted with more colors than she had tonnage. Again it was a big Italian freighter, high-sided, rusty-red in spots and squares, ambling along for Bordeaux. But by night the highway was empty and the four ships slid westward into a gentle sea while a soft breeze blew from the south and whispered of Spanish orange groves. Nelson was always glad he experienced the North Atlantic under the conditions he found that day and night, for never again, for as long as he roamed it, was it so kindly and bland.

In the morning, five hundred miles west of Land's End, they awoke to green seas that buffeted the bow under the steady push of a southeast wind and to a sky that alternated sun and squall. The destroyers rolled merrily and the spindrift flew aft as far as their second stacks. There was more signaling about noon and at two o'clock smoke was sighted ahead and the four ships picked up their pace and plowed on into an anxious group of transports and convoys. The transports were big passenger liners and their decks were solid brown streaks where boys in khaki waved and cheered, three and four deep behind the rails, as the newcomers sped amongst them.

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That was a fine sight to Nelson. Leaning from the *Gyandotte's* Number Four gun port, he waved back, and cheered a little, too, but was rather too chokey to make much noise. Lewis, first shellman, who leaned at Nelson's elbow, didn't try to shout. He just grinned all the time, and blinked his eyes, and kept muttering, over and over: "They're the boys to do it! Good old kids from the U. S. A.!" Nelson wondered at the tier on tier of faces, blurred by distance, that looked down from the many decks of the big liners. He couldn't see the expression of any individual countenance, for the *Gyandotte* didn't get close enough for that, but it seemed to him that a sort of composite and kindly grin beamed over the water from every one of the troopships. Now and then, when the wind allowed, he could hear the cheering, steady, continuous, and always broad-brimmed campaign hats fluttered like brown leaves in a breeze.

"They're the boys! Good old kids from the U. S. A.!" He found himself repeating Lewis' slogan in time to the song of the ship's engines. He felt very warm about his heart and a trifle damp of eye, and was proud and haughty and wouldn't have given a plugged nickel for the whole German Empire just then.

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The *Gyandotte*, flags fluttering, siren shrieking once or twice, sped along the edge of the crowd and wheeled into position far back on the starboard, almost touching elbows with a still smaller cruiser, whose graceful, yacht-like lines brought memories of Guantanamo. Twelve transports and six convoys had been the story until the new escort arrived. Now there were but four of the original convoys left, for two were already showing their propellers and hiking back to the west: "Straight for Broadway," as one yearning voice on the *Gyandotte* phrased it. Altogether the convoy now consisted of three cruisers—one an armored craft—and five destroyers. The "Big Lady" was saturnine looking and forbidding, like a great gray bulldog, and had four ridiculously high funnels and a basket mast forward and a military mast aft and was all broken out with search lights like a child with measles. She was the flagship, and didn't she know it? She signaled orders so fast that the signalmen dripped perspiration in the teeth of a southeast wind, and she gave the impression of being short-tempered and dangerous to fool with, and the result was that in an incredibly short time everyone was in the right place and on the very best possible behavior and the twelve adventurers were plowing

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on again at standard speed, every nose set straight for the port of Bordeaux.

It was well worth seeing, that little armada, and so Nelson thought. He couldn't see it all at once, for the two destroyers plowing ahead were so far away that he caught only occasional frisky glimpses of their rolling sticks or the fluttering ribbons of their oily smoke, and one ship had a mean way of hiding another. But he could see enough to get a fine proud thrill. The convoys encompassed the transports as collies herd a flock of sheep. In the lead were the two destroyers, while along the flanks were the four cruisers. Two other destroyers plunged along behind. So they steamed until darkness, when, obeying the good night instructions of the flagship, the convoys quartered off toward the rim of the world and the liners increased their intervals. But in the morning the destroyers came scampering back and the cruisers closed in again. That was a blustery, pitch-and-toss day, and Nelson, gazing across after gun drill, felt a bit sorry for those landsmen cooped up on the rolling top-heavy troopships. In such weather, he reflected grimly, there must be many absent from roll-call!

There were few excitements that day, and only once was a gun fired. Then what the target really

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was Nelson never knew, for the destroyer was far away and seemed to be firing at the horizon. By afternoon staring across the water at the nearest transport palled and even the lookouts slouched despondently at their stations and the watch officers yawned behind their hands and seemed to be asking of the gray skies if it was for this that they had left their cosy firesides! Another night and they were looking for the landfall. More than once on that voyage Nelson's thoughts had dwelt on the events of that tragic night, now almost eleven months ago when the *Jonas Clinton* had met her fate and he had last seen his father. Doubtless the *Gyandotte*, since leaving Queens-town, had passed within a hundred miles of the spot, and for all he knew some of the wreckage they had sighted might have been from the schooner. Wind and current play strange tricks with flotsam. Doubtless his nearness to the *Clin-ton's* grave accounted for the fact that his father was a great deal in his mind just then. He still managed to cling to the conviction that Captain Troy was alive, although as time passed and no word nor sign reached him the conviction grew weaker. But he had not yet given up hope. Perhaps so long as positive proof was wanting he never would.

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The dim, blue shore-line of France crept up above the misty edge of the sea about mid-day and that evening they were anchored in the broad estuary of the Gironde. It was early morning before the tide favored and the transports and one convoy rattled their winches and steamed up the river. The other ships slept at their anchors until daylight and then turned their bows seaward once more. When Nelson looked through a port in the morning he found the *Gyandotte* lying in sight of the picturesque, red-roofed city of Bordeaux.

CHAPTER XVIII

TIP, OF THE "SANS SOUCI"

THE next day Nelson went sight-seeing. He started out with a liberty party that filled several boats, but lost them somewhere ashore and presently found himself wandering along the river street alone. There was so much to see, however, that he failed to notice the absence of his companions for some time. It was a revelation to find that his country had built docks and ways, coal yards and cranes and great storehouses in which to pile the tons and tons of supplies that were landed almost every day from the big cargo boats. He found the transports which they had accompanied through the submarine zone empty of troops, lying along the river and preparing to speed back for a new load. Many were coaling, others were awaiting their turns. He learned that the boys in khaki had debarked the day before and had marched out of town to the big camp which had been built for them. In fact, at times yesterday he had

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heard the bugles and the strains of the regimental bands as the men had formed on the docks and gone marching away across the bridge and over the hill.

A United States uniform, army or navy, was sufficient voucher to carry its wearer almost anywhere, he found. The French folk smiled and murmured "*Bon jour!*" and every face seemed to hold a welcome. Nelson wished he knew more French; wished, too, that he was more courageous with the little he did know! The coalyards and dockyards were guarded by United States Marines, and with several of these Nelson conversed. They weren't exactly enthusiastic about their work, for they all wanted something more exciting, or, at least, more diversified, than standing guard over piers. But they spoke hopefully of better times. "We aren't worrying," said one chap, a tow-headed youth who showed more curiosity about the standing of the Chicago American baseball team than anything else. "Pershing'll have us out of here pretty quick. Anyone can do this job. We're fighters and we'll be needed at the front before long. Meanwhile we're doing pretty well for ourselves. This is a nice old burg and the folks are mighty decent to us."

Further along beyond the big locks a huge

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transport that had been a German liner a few months ago was taking on coal. Nelson's uniform gained him admittance at the gate and he looked on for some time. Coaling ship by machinery was, he decided, a pretty easy proposition compared to doing it by hand. Presently his attention was attracted by a squad of workers in gray uniforms who appeared on the scene. There were about forty of them in all and a half-dozen picturesque French soldiers, carrying guns with extremely long bayonets, were in charge. For an instant Nelson was puzzled. Then it dawned on him that he was looking on his first batch of German prisoners, and he moved nearer. A great pile of coal-blackened planks which had been used on some ship to form temporary bunkers was to be moved away from the front of the dock to a storage place beyond, and at this the prisoners were set. As they passed Nelson, two men to a plank, they looked dirty but cheerful. Evidently they preferred such a task to holding down a muddy trench somewhere on the Front. And, doubtless, they were getting enough to eat, which, if the tales one heard were true, would not have been the case had they been back in their own country. Nelson couldn't manage to work up much enmity against them: they looked too com-

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monplace and dull. Many of them viewed him with mild curiosity as they passed, and one or two grinned. The guards leaned on their rifles and merely watched. Escape would probably have been impossible, since a marine was stationed at every outlet, and, for that matter, it was extremely doubtful, Nelson thought, whether they wanted to escape!

Presently he moved across to where the new pile was forming. The prisoners worked methodically but slowly. When out of ear-shot of the guards they conversed in low tones. One of their number, a round-faced youth of twenty-two or thereabouts, was working by himself, carrying long iron bolts. Nelson observed that he wasn't overburdening himself and that he looked quite satisfied with conditions. The second time he passed he looked across at Nelson, smiled and said: "Hello, kid!" Nelson said "Hello" in reply before he was struck with the oddity of the phrase from the lips of a German prisoner of war. Coming back again the youth stopped.

"How's everything in America?" he asked. He spoke with very little accent.

"All right," answered Nelson.

"I used to live there," went on the other. "St. Louis. Great town, St. Louis. I lived there eight

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years. Say, were those American soldiers on those ships?"

"Yes."

"Honest?"

Nelson replied in the affirmative again and the German looked thoughtful. "If that's true they lied to us," he said. "In Berlin they told us the Yankees wouldn't come. They say that yet, I think. Are you telling the truth?"

"Of course! If you've lived in St. Louis you ought to know an American soldier when you see one."

The other shook his head. "I never saw any when I was there. Well, I guess this war won't last much longer, eh?"

"I hope not."

"So do I. I've had three years of it."

"How long have you been a prisoner?" asked Nelson.

"Four months. It's better than fighting." He grinned and winked. "There was an American in the prison camp where I was guard last Winter who used to say the United States would be in the war this Summer, but I didn't believe him. He was a sailor, like you, but not in the Navy. Now I know that he was right."

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“What sort of a looking man was he?” asked Nelson.

“Oh, he was a tall, oldish man. I must go on or Frenchie will stick me with his bayonet.”

“Wait! What was his name, this man you speak of?”

“I don’t know. I never knew his name. He had a number, but I forget it. He was all right. Nice man. Ship’s captain, I think. Tall, big fellow, with——”

There was a shout from the direction of the water and one of the guards came running toward them, bayonet lowered. The German laughed and moved on to receive a scolding. Having finished with the prisoner, the guard hurried toward Nelson. He was polite but stern and talked so fast that, even had Nelson understood French, he would not have been able to follow him. But the meaning was apparent. It was forbidden to speak with the prisoners. Nelson tried haltingly to explain that the prisoner in question had information of interest to him, but he couldn’t begin to find enough words, and the guard evidently knew no English save “No”; and afterwards Nelson decided that he hadn’t even been saying “No,” but “Non”!

Nelson lingered about a few minutes longer,

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but on his next trip the German sedulously avoided his vicinity, and, as the guards were watching him closely every moment, he finally gave up the attempt and made his way forth again. Of course, he reflected, it was probably only a coincidence. There were doubtless many Americans at German prison camps who had been ship's captains and who were tall and "oldish." Still, he couldn't get it out of his head that the man who had predicted the entry of America into the war was his father. He determined to get further speech with the prisoner and tried to think how to arrange for it. In the end he decided to secure the intercession of the *Gyandotte's* commander, and with that thought in mind returned to the ship at the first opportunity. But Fate was against him, for the captain was on shore and remained there until late that evening. Nelson took his gun captain, Garey, into his confidence meanwhile, and Garey was sympathetic but not overly impressed.

"It's one chance in a hundred, Troy," he said. "Take the average Yankee skipper and it's dollars to doughnuts that he's thin and tall and middle-aged. You see, about all the American prisoners the Germans have got so far are men they've taken off ships. It wouldn't do any harm

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to hear what that Fritz has to say, but I wouldn't hope for much. What camp was it?"

"He didn't tell me. I was going to ask, but the guard butted in just then."

"Well, you get speech with the Old Man and maybe he can fix it for you. He will if he can, anyway."

But it wasn't to be, and Nelson never saw the round-faced German from St. Louis again. The next morning, soon after daybreak, the *Gyandotte* pulled her anchors up from the bottom of the Gironde and picked her way down-stream and through the mine fields and headed back toward Queenstown.

Nevertheless, after his first disappointment, Nelson was happier for that chance meeting. Sometimes he told himself that it was silly to think that the German had really had speech with his father, but, as drowning persons clutch at straws, so Nelson clutched at that little bit of encouragement. It made life far happier, in any case, and now that Martin was gone life wasn't terribly joyous.

For a month longer the *Gyandotte* had her base at Queenstown and spent more than half her time at sea convoying transports and great cargo ships back and forth through the danger zone. Six days

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outside followed by three days in port was the usual rule. Excitement was always just over the horizon, but seldom appeared to cheer the monotony. Only once was the *Gyandotte* engaged with a U-boat, and that was a long-distance affair that netted nothing save disappointment. The German submarine was not anxious for battle and, after firing four shells wide of the mark, quickly submerged. The *Gyandotte's* fire was no more deadly than the U-boat's, nor did the depth bombs which were later dropped from the cruiser succeed any better than the shells. All the comfort the *Gyandotte* could gain from that brief and unsatisfactory encounter lay in the fact that the tramp steamer which had been the U-boat's intended prey was rescued.

On every trip there were alarms, and sometimes a periscope or conning tower was actually sighted. But always the sub dived before she was in range. Nelson found himself sympathizing with the destroyer men who chanted a ditty to the effect that:

"We joined the Limie 'gobs,' also,
To battle with the Hun,
And now we're waiting patiently
A Fritz who will not run!"

But if actual battles were few in the American

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patrol flotilla that Summer and Fall, there was plenty of incident. Storms became numerous as Autumn appeared, and the *Gyandotte* gave the lie to those pessimists who doubted her seaworthiness. There were occasions when Nelson concluded that if he ever reached land again it would be either in a small boat or atop a deck hatch, but the little cruiser always came through somehow, even if she almost stood on her beam ends doing it! Meanwhile Nelson found promotion of a sort. A vacancy in the crew of Number Four gun placed him as trainer, a position for which his study and Garey's instructions had well fitted him, and he blossomed forth with a seaman gunner's distinguishing mark, a bursting bomb worked in white silk on his sleeve. He was rather proud of that insignia and fairly ached for a chance to make good at his job.

He received one letter from Martin about the first of October, mailed at some town on the East coast of Scotland whose name Nelson could not decipher, and which, he decided, he wouldn't have been able to pronounce in any case. Martin reported that the *Q-4* was lying up undergoing battery replacements. "We've had a busy time of it since I saw you last," he continued. "We're helping the Limie subs patrol this beastly coast around

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here. There's a big base about twelve miles away where the British fleet is tucked up, and it's our stunt to see that no one slips in and 'strafes' them when they're having tea. It isn't bad fun, but nothing ever happens. They talk about going up and shelling the German fleet out of its base, but I guess it's only talk. It's none of my business, but if I was Jellicoe I'd want more action. The Englishers are a fine lot and we get along with them top-hole. (I'm getting to talk like one fast!) But this is a bleak old corner of the world and we nearly freeze to death when we go out. I wish they'd change us to the Mediterranean this Winter. Send me a letter to the address below and tell me what you're doing these days. Did you see that New York had copped the pennant? Some team, old scout, some team! You remember Jimmy Sanford, on my crew? He's the one with a bald spot in the middle of his head. Well, Jimmy's from Chicago and he won't speak to anyone since he's learned that Chicago has lost the World's Championship. I'll be mighty glad when this shindy is over, old settler. Me for home the first chance I get. I'm sort of fed up on this 'submarinery.' 'I know now that dad was right!'"

Nelson answered the first time he went ashore,

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but there came no further response from the distant Martin. Nelson had made other friends by now, both aboard the cruiser and ashore, but with none of them was he very intimate and none took the place of Martin in his affections. There was a young English midshipman named Tipper—more generally known as Tip—with whom Nelson chummed ashore. Tip was nineteen, a freckle-faced, tilt-nosed youngster full of fun and enthusiasm. Tip was aboard the British patrol boat *Sans Souci*, the flippant name having, through inadvertency, been allowed to remain, although most craft of the kind were distinguished by a mere number. Tip was second in command of the *Sans Souci* and had for superior officer a grave and reverend Reserve lieutenant of fifty-seven or -eight years who, if one believed Tip, left such trifles as navigation in the hands of the junior. There was a further complement of twelve petty officers and men, mostly young and enthusiastic, who apparently begrudged every day that the little converted yacht spent inside the booms. It was the *Sans Souci's* mission to ride a certain square section of the sea south of St. George's Channel, fair weather or foul, and watch for U-boats, mines and suspicious characters generally.

Nelson made young Mr. Tipper's acquaintance

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quite by accident in the Y. M. C. A. hut, Tip having come across a joke in an English weekly which he felt compelled to share with someone else. As Nelson happened to be the nearest, Nelson was chucklingly invited to read the humorous paragraph. He did so, found it funny, laughed and was instantly—and metaphorically—clasped to the breast of the smart, good-looking young midshipman. The fact that Nelson was not even a petty officer appeared to have no weight with Tip, who was surprisingly democratic for a British naval officer. Later Nelson discovered a kind of explanation, which was that in Tip's eyes an American was quite different from other beings and that with him the ordinary rules didn't hold good. Tip had queer ideas on the subject of American life and customs, largely due to his reading. He firmly believed that New York and San Francisco were, if not adjacent, at least within a day's journey of each other, and that anywhere between the two cities one plunged into trackless forests and crossed limitless plains inhabited by Indians, cowboys, "bad men," panthers, rattlers, alligators and a variety of less ferocious animals such as elk, bison and antelope. Somewhere north of the plains and forests lay a wild pile of mountains, filled with glaciers and mountain sheep, and be-

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yond those again was a country called Canada, inhabited by Younger Sons. He surprised Nelson one day by asking him if he had Indian blood in him, and was palpably disappointed when Nelson said no. At first Nelson dubbed his new acquaintance "a cheerful idiot," but it didn't take long to find that while Tip was undoubtedly cheerful he was far from being an idiot. Tip had plenty of money and was happiest when spending it. A "jolly good feed" was his favorite extravagance, and Nelson was frequently his guest. Had Tip had his way Nelson would have been entertained in the little hotel he had discovered, at every meal ashore, but Nelson had to refuse many times when he wanted very much to accept simply because he didn't care to be in the other's debt too greatly. On thirty-six dollars a month, which was his present pay as a seaman gunner, he couldn't play host very frequently. One day he went out in a very smart little gig to the *Sans Souci* and was shown that diminutive "warship."

The *Sans Souci* had once been a rather luxurious cruising yacht, but luxuries had been shorn away with a stern hand until now she was little more than a hull accommodating engine and bunks, with a small rapid-fire gun mounted on the bow. In length she was just over the dimension of the

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Wanderer. In seaworthiness, however, she appeared to have the better of that boat. She burned gasoline—or petrol, as they called it in those waters—and storage tanks were scattered all over her, above deck and below. The officers lived in Spartan simplicity, commander and junior sharing a tiny stateroom abaft the engine and eating forward in the galley.

"We have our chunk first, you know," explained Tip. "But it's very seldom we sit down to it, for when this little lady gets into a sea you simply can't keep anything on the table."

Nelson secretly thought that careening about the channel in the *Sans Souci* might be exciting enough, but he was sort of thankful he didn't have to do it. Sailing the waters of Nantucket Sound in the old *Wanderer* had been fairly safe work, but tossing about a hundred miles from land in this shallop was another thing entirely! He admired Tip's pluck but didn't envy him.

The *Sans Souci* had been black at one time, and then the vogue of decorating ship's hulls with lines and ripples and spots had come in, and the little craft was a strange and fearsome thing above the water line. Tip was very proud of the camouflaging, though. He had even taken a hand at it himself, borrowing a brush from the painter and

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adding some gruesome streaks of pea green to the black, gray, white and blue already there. Tip claimed that you couldn't tell the *Sans Souci* from a mermaid half a mile distant, and Nelson was prepared to believe it, even though he had never seen a mermaid. Lieutenant Putnam-Earle greeted Nelson politely but failed to accept the hand that Nelson unthinkingly extended. ("You mustn't mind Put," said his junior afterwards. "He's like that. Awf'ly fussy, you know, about rank and all that rot. Comes of one of our oldest families. So old it's fairly putrid. He's not a half bad old chap.") Nelson didn't allow the incident to worry him. Of course the lieutenant had been quite right. A commanding officer doesn't shake hands with an ordinary seaman on being introduced; at least, not on duty. The lieutenant struck Nelson as being a far from cheerful companion for a fellow like Tip, and wondered what it was like to have to live with him for three days at a stretch at sea. The crew seemed a fine lot of young Britons, and he could understand a portion of Tip's enthusiasm for his command.

As the *Sans Souci* spent three days on duty and three days in port alternately, Nelson usually had a good deal of Tip's society when the *Gyandotte*

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was in Queenstown. Liberty was freely granted when the cruiser was in port and Nelson and Tip made several excursions to nearby points of interest, once getting as far afield as Dublin and once to Limerick. Cork was a favorite jaunt until the men of the fleets were forbidden to visit that city because of Sinn Fein demonstrations. Ireland was as much *terra incognita* to Tip as it was to Nelson, and they had a good deal of fun in exploring it.

The Limerick trip was made at Tip's suggestion. He declared that all his life he had wanted to go and see where the poetry was made. Once there, and perched on an outside car, he had inquired affably of the jarvey where they made the limericks. "I'd like to see the factory, you know. We might take home a couple." This was beyond the driver, however. He, it appeared, had never heard of a limerick verse, and didn't seem to think very much of those that Tip recited for his benefit. On the return journey Nelson suggested that Limerick was not likely to win fame, as Cork had done, through the medium of one of the verses named for it, since there was nothing to rhyme with Limerick. Whereupon Tip had gazed fixedly out the carriage window for a space and had then recited triumphantly:

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**“There was an old man of Limerick
Who said: ‘I’m the boy as can trim a rick.’
They gave him a fork,
But he ran off to Cork.
I forget if his name it was Jim or Mick.”**

**“I guess,” said Nelson, “the supper is on me.”
All the rest of the way back to Queenstown Tip
invented limericks, until Nelson said despairingly
that he wished he had never mentioned the things!**

CHAPTER XIX

OFF HELIGOLAND

THE *Gyandotte* steamed out of Queens-town one October twilight in company with four destroyers and headed south-east, a departure from the usual proceeding that excited comment and conjecture from one end of the ship to the other. The bulletin was eagerly searched, but the Old Man had nothing to say as yet as regarded destination or duty. It was not until morning and the *Gyandotte*, still in company with the destroyers, was seen to be off the southern coast of Cornwall that the unprecedented was known to have happened. So far the *Gyandotte* had never dipped her nose into the waters of the English Channel. Few of the American patrol boats had, either, for their sphere of activity was principally to the south and west. Naturally the rumor that they were to rendezvous with the British Grand Fleet somewhere in the North Sea for an attack in force on a German naval base became current, mainly because that was the thing that

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every man's heart longed for. All that day they steamed slowly through treacherous waters, waters far more populous than those they had been frequenting. Mine layers and sweepers, sea-planes, torpedo boats, cargo boats, destroyers, chasers—they saw them all. They passed within sight of Plymouth and the Isle of Wight, with Portsmouth hiding around the corner of it, and finally Eastbourne, and by that time the coast of France was clear to the eastward, and a Channel steamer plowed past them quite as though war was a thing of the past. The cliffs of Dover loomed up toward evening, and it was then that Nelson saw mine sweepers actually at work for the first time. Directed by a saucy little patrol yacht, the two blunt-nosed trawlers steamed westward on parallel courses, a long cable connecting them. Although Nelson watched eagerly as long as they were within sight they apparently found no mines. They were still at it when distance and twilight hid them from view. Some time that night the *Gyandotte* emerged into the North Sea, for the next morning she was rolling merrily out of sight of land and the quartet of destroyers were rolling even more merrily ahead and astern, stretched out for nearly a mile. Nelson thrilled at the thought that somewhere to the east of them

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was Heligoland and the entrance to the Kiel Canal and the German navy lying behind its network of mines in the land-locked harbors. Heligoland was a word to conjure with, and Nelson peered into a typical North Sea mist as though he meant to penetrate to the distant rock by sheer force of will.

"I bet you it makes England sick," remarked Garey, when Nelson mentioned the German naval base. "She swapped that rock for something, I forgot what, and I guess she wishes now she'd kept it, all right. Gee, it's a cinch for Germany! They say she spent fifty million dollars on it, making fortifications and so on. I'll bet Gibraltar hasn't a thing on Heligoland nowadays. Hundreds of eleven-inch guns they've got there, they say. A lot of good it would be for a fleet to try to shell that! And a fine chance it would have of getting around it. Yah, that man Salisbury played the goat, all right, when he engineered that deal! Wouldn't you think the English would have been afraid to give up an outpost like that?"

"Yes, but suppose England still owned it," objected Nelson. "Could she have held it today? It's almost within gun range of the shore, isn't it?"

"About forty miles, I guess. Sure, she could

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have held it. All she had to do was fortify it just as Germany has done——”

“But maybe Germany would have objected to another power fortifying a place so close.”

“Suppose she did object? What could she have done about it?”

“Why, I don't know. Appeal to the Hague ——”

“Hah! You make me laugh,” jeered Garey. “If England had kept that rock in the sea this war would be over.”

“Really? Why?”

“Because Heligoland commands the mouth of the Kiel Canal and all the harbors along the coast in that corner where Germany has her ships hiding: Cuxhaven, Wilhelmshaven and Friedrichskoog, and the mouth of the Elbe that leads to Hamburg; and the Weser, too. Why, Germany couldn't have found a place on the Atlantic coast that the English couldn't have shelled her out of! As it is now Heligoland gives her a fine anchorage for warships, a base for submarines and airships and Zeppelins and destroyers and a signal outpost. They've got searchlights on Heligoland, they say, that'll pick up a dory twenty miles away! Talk about your soft snaps! Germany's got the softest ever. She ought to include Lord Salisbury

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in her prayers every night: 'God bless Lord Salisbury for letting us have Heligoland!'

"I'd love to see it," mused Nelson.

"Well, you aren't likely to, I guess. If the *Gyandotte* started in toward that old rock I'd hand in my papers and fall overboard! None of those eleven-inch shells brushing my cap off, thank you! Nothing doing! Nothing at all!"

"Where do you suppose we're going?" asked Nelson.

"Norway, probably, but don't ask me what for. Won't anything happen, anyway. Nothing ever does on this old skate. All we do is act the nice old gentleman with the umbrella helping the young ladies off the street car and escorting them to the sidewalk. We don't even get splashed with mud."

"But," laughed Nelson, "if you want action why are you against having a peek at Heligoland?"

"Sure, I want action, but I'm not asking for sudden death, believe me, Troy! What I'd like would be a crack at a couple of light cruisers of about our own size. Or three, for good measure. But butting your head against a hundred eleven-inch guns isn't giving yourself a fair show. It's plain suicide."

"Didn't the British ship *Arethusa* do it?"

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"When was that?"

"The first year of the war, I think."

"Oh, that! Take it from me, Troy, the *Arethusa* didn't go near enough that little rock to be seen. That was off the North Frisians, if I remember, and the British ships were careful to pick out a fine misty day. The *Arethusa* did well, though. I'm not saying she wasn't a plucky one. As I figure that little ruction, this fellow Beatty—wasn't he the chap that time?—had his big ships waiting outside in case the Germans showed fight. The *Arethusa* went in close to draw 'em out. She did it, too, for a couple of German cruisers met her and smeared her considerable. Then she backed out and had tea and fixed things up and went back to it. And they say—and I guess it's right—that she 'strafed' the two Fritzes before she called it a day. Sank one and set the other afire. There were other ships mixed up in that row: the *Lion*, the *Queen Mary*, the *Invincible*, I think it was, and some more. And I dare say there were destroyers barking around, too. And German subs, maybe. I guess it was a pretty scrap, all right, only it was so foggy and dark no one could see who they were fighting. The British did for three German cruisers and some destroyers, and she took hundreds of prisoners; old

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Admiral von Turpentine's son among them. But I never heard how many ships the British lost, except from Berlin, and you can't believe what Berlin says. But I'm betting the Johnnie Bulls didn't get very close to old Mr. Heligoland!"

"One did," remarked Nelson. "The *Liberty*."

"Did, eh? *Liberty*? Sounds like one of ours. I don't remember her."

"Well, she was only a little destroyer, Garey. But she waltzed straight in under those guns and tried to torpedo the big ships lying in the harbor. And she kept on until she had only one round of ammunition left and one torpedo in her tubes. Then she turned tail and beat it back. She lost her commander and three of her crew, but she lived to tell the story in spite of all the eleven-inch shells they plumped down on her; enough, I guess, to sink her twice over if they'd hit her!"

"What do you know about that?" asked Garey. "Say, she was some little kid, what? Well, you've got to hand it to the British for pluck. I always say that. And, say, that *Liberty* ship was well named, wasn't she? I wouldn't wonder if she was an American destroyer they'd borrowed from us, or something. Anyway, I'll bet more than half the 'gobs' were Irish!"

There's always a nasty, choppy sea running in

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that stretch of water hemmed in by the British Isles and the coasts of Germany and Denmark. Shallow and treacherous and generally vile, it is abhorred by sailors the world over, and those on the *Gyandotte* could find nothing good to say of it. All that day the mist held and hid everything a mile or so distant, and the lookouts never kept their eyes peeled any more thoroughly than they did while the line of ships steamed on toward the north. It was an area well infested with German submarines, while it was no unusual thing for a pack of destroyers to dart out from one of the protected bases on the chance of picking off a lone prey. But, save that the sharp, short waves kept the decks wet and made everyone uncomfortable—life on the destroyers must have been miserable indeed, Nelson thought—no incident pleasant or unpleasant broke the monotony. Forty-six hours after passing Dover the American ships reached the Skager Rack and dropped anchors off Christiansand, where, during a long, black night, they rolled and tumbled miserably. Nelson always recalled that night as one of the most unpleasant of his life, for they had suddenly penetrated into Winter weather and few of the men had as yet received their heavy clothing. Even below deck it was cold, and in the hammocks sleep was a chill

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nightmare. Pitch and toss and freeze was the program that night, and not a man aboard but longed for daylight. Ferris, for once supplied with something to be thoroughly pessimistic about, fairly outdid himself!

The next morning, which dawned bright and frostily clear, the ships sought calmer quarters and in the afternoon liberty was granted and the little city was over-run with Jackies. The attitude of the inhabitants puzzled Nelson. They appeared friendly, or, certainly, not unfriendly, but kept oddly aloof and were uncommunicative to a degree. The men on all ships had been specially and strictly cautioned as to behavior, and as a result the Christiansand folks had nothing to complain of on that score. Ferris remarked gloomily that they were "a frosty lot," and reckoned they never got quite thawed out after the long Winters.

Towards five o'clock word went around that warships were coming up from southward, and there was much activity along the harbor front. A Norwegian gunboat of a very ancient vintage rolled out to sea, apparently, as one of the *Gyandotte's* crew said, "to give 'em the once over." Evidently the gunboat was satisfied. Or else she thought discretion the better part of valor. In

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either case, she was soon hiking back to the protection of the fort, looking immensely relieved. It was nearly six o'clock before the newcomers revealed themselves beyond question as British destroyers. They slap-banged cheerfully through the channel and came about and slid to anchorage amidst the American ships with a dash that brought cheers of admiration as well as welcome from the latter. The British "gobs" cheered back and for several minutes the staid old harbor was extremely noisy and ribald. Signal flags fluttered, boatswain's pipes *peep-peeped*, bugles called, and winches rattled and hummed. And along the shore the mild-eyed and annoyingly self-contained citizens looked on curiously. Perhaps they suspected an Allied attack. If they did their demeanor was a model of coolness.

On the *Gyandotte* the side boys lined up, the boatswain trilled merrily and the Old Man and the luff went over the side into a gig and were pulled away to the British flagship, a three-stacked destroyer with great high bows and a veritable bulwark of depth charges lined amidship. Nelson wondered hard what it all meant, and his heart thumped like a hammer several times when he realized the possibilities. The combined forces included a light cruiser and ten destroyers, enough

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thought Nelson hopefully to provide some lively times if the enemy was sighted. He climbed into his hammock at midnight, however, with curiosity still unappeased, and the next day was quite uneventful. One might have thought that the American and British ships had made an appointment at Christiansand merely to enjoy an uninterrupted palaver. The northern sunlight made gay with fluttering bunting, small boats crossed from ship to ship and the harbor had a most holiday appearance. On shore, Limie "gobs" and American tars fraternized and swapped yarns and rode on the tram cars or in carriages and saw the sights very happily. Not until late in the day was the disappointing truth made known. Then from eastward, probably out of Christiania, lumbered fourteen Norwegian cargo boats, each well down in the water and each fairly shrieking its nationality in great white letters along its hull. And this was what the *Gyandotte* and all the destroyers had come hundreds of miles for! To escort a lot of freighters across the North Sea! It was fairly disgusting!

The cargo boats, which ranged from big to little, passed on down the Rack, exchanging signals with the flagship, and went out of sight in the early darkness, and for awhile Nelson hoped against

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hope. But presently the bugle called, winches clattered all over the harbor and the fleet followed. Nelson could have wept. The fine adventure had come to nothing in the end but the old, old story: convoying! Ferris summed it up in one bitter word: "*Stung!*"

CHAPTER XX

THE BATTLE IN THE NORTH SEA

NELSON reached the deck confused, half-awake. In his ears was the terrific wailing sound that had sent him instinctively tumbling from his hammock. For an instant he blinked and strove to gather scattered faculties. Up and down the deck hammocks were emptying and feet padded hurriedly past. He grabbed at his clothes, his heart leaping as the meaning of the din came to him. It was General Quarters! The bugle had taken up the alarm and the quick notes sounded nearer and nearer. The dim electric lamps still glowed, but a wan light from open ports showed daylight outside. Already the watch was connecting fire hose. Somewhere near at hand the shrill, piercing shriek of a siren drowned the gongs and bugles. The shriek rose and fell deafeningly and grew fainter. Nelson knew without seeing that a destroyer had dashed past them astern. The rudder chains were groaning, and from the engine rooms came a louder hum

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and clatter. Sleep was gone now, and he hurried to his station. Shells were already coming up, and as Nelson fell in the command of "*Stations!*" was given. Through the port, as he sprang to the training wheel, lay a segment of choppy, drab ocean across which a gray destroyer was hurtling with clouds of oily smoke whirling back from her four stacks. A leaden sky was overhead and a sea-mist hung like a curtain a few miles away. From the destroyer came a flash of pale rosy light and the sharp bark of a four-inch gun.

"Bore clear!"

"Load!"

A geyser of water shot into the air astern of the destroyer.

"Rotten shooting, Fritz!" muttered a shellman as he rammed home. Waiting, Nelson peered tensely into the mist. Once he thought he saw a gray shadow there, but was not certain. "*Ready!*" The officer spoke sharply into the telephone. Then they waited, plugman, pointer, trainer, sight setter, shellmen and powdermen. A second destroyer reeled past at a good thirty knots, a "*Limie*" this time, her siren blowing hysterically as she demanded sea room.

"Gangway for Lord Goldashington," murmured the sight setter.

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Suddenly from farther forward came the sharp, clear explosion of one of the *Gyandotte's* bow guns. Someone behind Nelson growled impatiently. Then the fire control system awoke to life.

"Now, then, men! Look alive!" called the division officer. "Show 'em what Number Four can do!" Wheels were turning and the gun was coming swiftly to the unseen target. A moment of suspense, and then:

"Commence firing!"

It was the United States destroyer *Banks* whose foretop lookout, peering into the early morning mist, had caught sight of a tell-tale streak of darker gray against the water and had sounded the warning. Almost by the time the officer on the bridge had found the object with his glasses it was gone, but the *Banks*, signaling the alarm to the flagship, had swung out of line and gone tearing off in the direction of the Fritz. The flagship gave hurried orders and the plan of action already provided was carried into effect. The freighters crowded on all steam and went wallowing southwestward at their best gaits, while every second convoy swung out of line and went into action with a fine enthusiasm. For a good two minutes nothing was seen nor heard of the foe,

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but when a torpedo had missed the British destroyer *143* by a matter of yards only it was evident that the *Banks'* lookout had not been mistaken. A second torpedo a moment later tore into the stern of a cargo boat, its direction proving that the first U-boat was not alone. But none had sighted the second sub, and after that first fire the Allied ships became silent and contented themselves with circling about the supposed lurking places of the U-boats and dropping depth bombs. Gray green water spouted over a wide radius, but the Huns had fled. For twenty minutes the destroyers dashed here and there, their sirens shrieking warnings to each other, while the *Gyandotte*, for want of anything to fire at, steamed back to her position, disgruntled. This was at a quarter past five and about one hundred and fifty miles west-south-west of the Naze, approximately 57 North and 4 West. The excitement lasted about one hour, at the end of which time the destroyers in action sped back after their companions. On the *Gyandotte* the command "Secure" was not given, however, and the crews stood by the guns. At shortly after six, twenty-two minutes after by Nelson's watch, the second engagement began.

This time three periscopes were sighted almost

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simultaneously to the southeast at distances varying from six hundred to fourteen hundred yards. Seven torpedoes were seen, three of which found marks. The steamer *Bok Fjord*, one of the larger freighters, was struck amidships and went down three hours later. A British destroyer, the *86*, was put out of action and a second Norwegian, the *Ymir*, sustained slight damage. The first shots at the Germans were well placed but the U-boats had already submerged. Depth charges were again dropped and, it was believed, one sub was accounted for. A quarter of an hour after the first alarm was given lookouts spied smoke above the low bank of mist to the eastward, which presently evolved itself into a flotilla of enemy ships. These consisted of eight destroyers and three light cruisers, and at about seven the first shells from the latter were fired. Eight of the Allied ships, seven destroyers and the *Gyandotte*, had immediately left the convoy and steamed to meet them, scattering so as to cover the merchantmen which, with the exception of the *Bok Fjord*, were all able to keep their course. This third engagement became general at seven-fifteen.

The *Gyandotte* opened up at six thousand yards, by which time she had been struck once without much damage, finding herself opposed to

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a slightly more formidable cruiser which afterwards proved to be the *Dornburg*. Separate engagements soon developed, with several of the smaller German destroyers hanging back during the first phase of the battle and firing at long range without much execution. A calm sea, with little wind, made for good sighting, but smoke hung close to the surface and frequently obscured the target. The *Gyandotte* used only her bow guns at first, drawing the *Dornburg* away to the southeast. Superior speed gave an advantage to the latter, however, and she was eventually able to choose her position. The *Gyandotte* stood off under a heavy broadside fire and brought her stern guns to bear, and finally her starboard broadside. Her marksmanship was proving superior, although the *Dornburg* had the advantage of more guns. The two ships drew southwestward, firing at about five thousand yards, and continued on that course until the *Dornburg*, having been thrice hulled amidships, showed distress and was evidently unable to answer to her helm. She turned westward and sought to escape, but the *Gyandotte*, taking up a position to starboard, held a parallel course and, while suffering severe damage herself, soon had the *Dornburg* at her mercy. After forty minutes, during which the

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two ships had drawn some ten miles from the main engagement, the *Dornburg* was seen to be on fire aft. She was now using only three stern guns and these were presently silent, and from the *Gyandotte* they could see the crew assembling forward. By this time the after part of the German cruiser was hidden by smoke clouds. An explosion of ammunition tore a gaping hole forward of the mainmast and a minute later the cruiser listed to port. The *Gyandotte* withheld her fire and demanded surrender. To this there was no reply. A band assembled and the strains of the "Watch on the Rhine" floated from the doomed ship. Already many of the crew were going overboard, although apparently no order had as yet been given. The *Gyandotte* lowered boats, but a new enemy appeared and they were recalled. A blue-gray destroyer of some nine hundred tons was bearing down from the northward and the *Gyandotte* at once engaged her. This action was short, for the destroyer was twice hulled at seven thousand yards, and, although she kept ahead for awhile, firing from bow guns and launching two torpedoes, she presently turned tail and made off toward the coast. Her shots did small damage and neither torpedo struck, although one came to

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the surface within a few yards of the *Gyandotte's* bow.

The *Dornburg's* commander refused to surrender and the *Gyandotte* again lowered away boats. By this time the crew of the German ship were going overboard *en masse* and the ship was well down by the stern. The *Gyandotte* picked up one hundred and forty-four officers and men, while a large number went down and many dead and wounded remained aboard. The *Dornburg* sunk at eight-fifty. Her captain stayed with her, but was rescued a few minutes later apparently none the worse for his heroism. The *Gyandotte* attended to her own wounds, many but mostly superficial, and rejoined the flotilla shortly before nine. She had lost one officer and twelve men and had more than twenty injured. Two guns were out of commission and an explosion below deck had wrecked a port boiler. Two compartments were flooded when she made her way back. Above deck she was pretty well littered, for the *Dornburg's* fire had been high.

What had been going on during her engagement was not at first apparent, but as she drew nearer the scene of action it was evident that the Germans had had all they wanted. Three destroyers were fleeing to the eastward, dropping

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mines as they went, pursued by two British craft, firing with telling effect. Northward a fourth had surrendered, while, fair in the course of the *Gyandotte*, poking her nose through the mist, a German light cruiser was in flames. The *Gyandotte* picked up signals and veered to the westward where the merchantmen were doggedly holding their course. As it turned out later, they had had their troubles, they and the ships left to guard them, for a U-boat had again attacked and had got home on a fourth freighter which, as the *Gyandotte* drew near, was spouting smoke forward. Three miles away a destroyer was circling in a vain endeavor to find the sub, while two others were standing by the burning ship.

At ten o'clock the engagement was over, having occupied just under four hours and resulted in a decisive victory for the Allied forces. Germany had lost two of three cruisers and three of eight destroyers. Of the latter, one was captured and was later able to reach Newcastle under her own power. The cruisers, *Dornburg* and *Ernten*, sank, the latter, slightly larger than the *Gyandotte's* adversary, first burning to the water's edge. Of the Allied ships, the British destroyer *Jade* was sunk by a torpedo and the *276*, attacked simultaneously by a destroyer and cruiser, was

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fairly riddled before a lyddite fire broke out and caused her abandonment. She was ultimately torpedoed and sunk by the flagship. Of the United States ships only the *Grayson* was lost. She was made helpless early in the battle when a shell tore away her whole stern. Attempts to tow her out of range were unsuccessful, and, in spite of the efforts of her officers and crew to save her, she sank shortly after. The Allies lost four officers and thirty-one men and had upwards of sixty injured. Against this the German loss was approximately eighty dead, of which fully a third were drowned, over a hundred injured and two hundred and seventy-two taken prisoner. Of the cargo boats the *Bok Fjord* was sunk and three others more or less seriously damaged, with a loss of six lives and injury to as many more. Temporary repairs were effected by one o'clock, by which time the warships were again in formation and the flotilla was headed back on its course under reduced speed.

Wireless messages had been picked up promptly and soon after one o'clock four destroyers came boiling out of the west. Too late to get into the scrap, after a two hundred mile race at thirty-two knots or better, the *Limies* looked the dejection they undoubtedly felt as they wheeled around be-

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hind the columns and followed to within sight of the coast. There were no more alarms, and the convoy dropped anchor off Tynemouth at day-break the next morning.

CHAPTER XXI

CASTAWAYS

NELSON was watching the disembarkation of the prisoners after breakfast when an orderly tapped him on the arm. "Report to the Exec, Troy," he said.

"What? Where is he?"

"Where would he be? Sitting on the for'ard funnel warming his feet, of course. Get a move on!"

Nelson didn't find the Executive Officer where the orderly said, perhaps because he didn't look for him there. Instead, he went aft and paused before a door opening from the wardroom passage, brushing an imaginary speck from his overshirt and adjusting a gauze bandage which, running diagonally across his forehead above his right eye, gave him a somewhat reckless look. Then, the door being open, he saluted and: "Ordered to report to you, sir," he announced.

"Come in. What's the name?"

"Troy, sir."

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"Right." The lieutenant-commander swung about in his swivel chair and scrutinized Nelson swiftly. "You are trainer of Number Four gun crew?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are mentioned in the Gunnery Officer's report, Troy. Tell me what happened yesterday morning on your station."

"The enemy got a five-inch shell into us, sir, about thirty feet forward of Number Four gun. The explosion killed two of our crew, Hoskins and Maynard, and wounded our division officer and four men."

"I see. Your gun captain was wounded, too, wasn't he?"

"Yes, sir, but he's doing finely."

"After that shell came aboard you were minus six of your number then: plugman, pointer, two shellmen——"

"Sight setter, sir, and one powderman."

"What happened then?"

Nelson hesitated. "The injured were removed, sir——"

"The gun was not damaged?"

"Firing circuit was broken, but we got that repaired pretty quick."

"I see." The Executive Officer glanced at a

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paper^a that lay on the desk beside him. "And after making repairs you and others continued to serve the gun until the end of the engagement?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who took command?"

"I did, sir. I seemed to be—I thought it was up to me, sir."

"How many were with you?"

"Three, sir, until they got word that we were short-handed. Then they sent us four more men."

"How long were you short-handed, Troy?"

"I don't know, sir. About twenty minutes, maybe."

"Make any hits during that time?"

"Yes, sir, we didn't miss many. We were firing pretty slow, though, because Scott, one of the powdermen, who took the plug, didn't understand it at first. And we had no shellman."

"What did you do?"

"I pointed, sir, and Jennings trained; and we all helped at loading."

"You were hurt, too?"

"Not much, sir. A bit of shell cut my head a little."

"The Gunnery Officer reports that 'Seaman Gunner Troy, Naval Reserve, then took command and with three other seamen, made repairs to elec-

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trical circuit and served gun for upwards of half an hour.' You estimate the time at twenty minutes."

"It might have been a half-hour, sir."

"It's a bit difficult to judge the passage of time under some circumstances." The officer smiled.

"In any case you did good work, Troy, and I shall take pleasure in recommending you for promotion."

Nelson flushed. "Thank you, sir," he murmured. Then: "I didn't do any more than Jennings and Scott and Farley, sir," he disclaimed. "They——"

"I understand. I have their names, too. That's all, Troy."

Nelson saluted and made his way out. In the passage he looked down at his right sleeve and tried to vision a white silk eagle and a single red chevron and, possibly, the crossed cannons of a gunner's mate. He smiled happily as he went on to pay a visit to Garey and tell him of his good fortune. The gun captain had been wounded in the left arm, but a week would put him right.

The *Gyandotte* laid up at South Shields for three days, during which time the sound of pneumatic drills and hammers made life hideous. Then there was painting to be done over the new

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plates. Ashore the *Gyandotte's* crew swaggered a little, less from vanity than from a sense of pleasure in having contributed their bit, and no longer had to sit mum while "Limie" men told of desperate deeds in the North Sea. A message of praise from their own Admiral and one from the British Admiral were posted, and they learned that they had "worthily upheld the traditions of the United States Navy." The public, however, received a very meager account of that engagement.

The *Gyandotte* hurried back to Queenstown as soon as repairs were completed and reported for duty. It may have been imagination, but it really seemed to Nelson that the little battle-tryed cruiser held herself more cockily than usual when she steamed between the forts that afternoon. Two days later she was pounding the seas off Cape Clear, bound west to meet another covey of nervous transports, and the monotony of the old life threatened again.

Two trips to the border of the danger zone she made before an incident worth recording occurred, and then the incident was of more interest to Nelson than to others aboard. They were steaming westward, some eighty miles from the Cape at the time. Ahead and astern were three

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destroyers and two cruisers. The sea was as much like a mill-pond as it ever gets in that locality, where fathoms are few, and a bright late October sun made dancing ripples across the water as it climbed into the eastern sky. It was at about half-past seven when a lookout reported to the bridge that what seemed to be a small boat was in sight to the north. Signals were exchanged with the four-stack cruiser behind and presently the *Gyandotte* left her place and bore northward toward where a tiny dark speck lay on the blue ocean.

Rescuing "strafed" mariners in open boats had long since become an old story, but one never knew what would be revealed in the way of suffering and pathos, and as the cruiser drew near the little boat the officers and men flocked to the rail. At a quarter of a mile distant the tiny craft seemed empty, but the foretop lookout reported persons in the bottom of the boat. The *Gyandotte* gave a questioning blast and, in answer, an arm appeared above the gunwale and waved feebly. As the cruiser slowed and began to turn a boat was lowered and presently was pulling lustily for the derelict. Reaching it, the rescuers made a line fast to the bow and brought it alongside in tow, and then those on deck could see what was there.

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It was a tiny boat, no larger than a yacht's tender. In the bottom of it were five forms, three sailors and two officers. At first glance life seemed to have departed from all of them, but as they were lifted out two showed consciousness. Quickly they were raised aboard and carried to the hospital: an elderly officer whose salt-stained uniform showed him to be a British Naval Reserve lieutenant, a younger man with the insignia of a midshipman and three sailors. Something in the appearance of the younger officer stirred Nelson's memory and he thrust himself through the throng for a closer look. And as he did so, the midshipman, being borne past, opened his eyes for a brief instant and his listless gaze encountered Nelson's face, and in that instant recognition flickered in the blue eyes. Then the lids fell again wearily and he passed from sight, and Nelson, steadying himself against a stanchion, felt sick and faint. For the gray countenance had been that of Tip!

Nelson spent a miserable half-hour before he at last got word with one of the hospital apprentices and asked for news.

"Eh?" said the apprentice. "Him? Oh, he'll pull through. The old chap's been dead two days, though, I guess. One of the sailors, too. The

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midshipman and one of the others will come around. We haven't got their story yet. Too weak to talk. I reckon a couple of them'll be taking their meals regular tomorrow."

He was very, very glad that Tip would live, so glad that for a moment he forgot the others. Then, recalling the somewhat melancholy and stiff-mannered elderly lieutenant to whom Tip had introduced him on the *Sans Souci* that day, he felt horribly sorry. He wondered what had been the fate of that gallant little patrol boat, and whether all the rest of the crew had perished. In the afternoon he took his courage in hand and made inquiry of the Medical Officer, explaining his interest. The officer was very kind and gave Nelson all the information he had, which was that Midshipman Tipper was suffering from hunger and exposure and at the moment was very weak, but that he was responding excellently to treatment and that he would undoubtedly be on his feet in a day or two. Then it was the Medical Officer's turn to question, and Nelson told him what he knew of the rescued men and the *Sans Souci*, and the officer made notes.

"We'll make report," he said. "Glad to get the information. I'll see that you have a chance

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to talk with your friend as soon as he's in condition to see you."

It was not until the second day later, however, by which time the *Gyandotte* was headed eastward once more, while many troopships and convoys led and followed, that Nelson received permission to visit Tip. He found him in one of the officers' staterooms, whither he had been removed after a brief stay in the sick bay. He didn't look much like the white-faced, hollow-eyed youth who had been lifted over the side three days before. He was lying in a berth, partly dressed, with an American magazine in his hand when Nelson appeared. The magazine dropped to the floor and Tip gave a very healthy whoop of delight as the door swung open.

"Wot cheer, Troy!" he exclaimed. "I thought you weren't coming to see a chap." He reached forth an eager hand and gave Nelson's a hard grip. "Isn't it rum I should have been picked up by your ship? I say, when I saw you last I never looked for this sort of a—whatyoucall it—reunion! Isn't it horrible about the poor old *Sans Souci*?" His smile faded abruptly and he shook his head.

"What happened?" asked Nelson, seating himself.

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"That's so, you don't know, do you? I'll spin the yarn for you in a moment. Tell me first about yourself. Everything all right? I hear you're in line for a petty officership all along of being a bloomin' hero awhile back."

"Never mind about me, Tip. I'm all right. What happened to you?"

"Oh, me? We-ell, it was a rotten bit of luck, Troy. You know the dear old Luff's gone?" Nelson nodded. "Yes, flickered out the first night we were afloat. Died like a hero, though." Tip's lip trembled. "Troy, if—if the Lord doesn't make 'em pay for all the wickedness they've done——" He swallowed hard, and then the old smile flooded back. "They got us a week ago today—no, a week ago yesterday. We were jaunting along all cozy about twenty miles so'-west of St. Gowan's Head. It was a fine moonlight night and the sea was decently calm and the dear little tub was doing her standard of twelve knots. There was one of our destroyers running close to starboard and she'd just blinked us to keep off when Nutley, who was standing look-out for'ard, gave a yell. I was on the bridge and didn't hear what he shouted, but I ordered hard aport, taking a chance, as you'd say. I fancy it wouldn't have made a pennyworth of

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difference what I'd ordered, for the 'moldie' was right under us before Nutley saw it. It struck us amidship and broke us fair in two. We never saw hide nor hair of the 'fish' that did it. We just made an infernal noise and went down in about two minutes, like a match you'd broken in the middle. Most of the men were killed by the explosion, but there was Nutley and Grogan and me for'ard and out of it, for some reason. The bridge went half-way up to the signal pole, with me clinging to it, and came down in pieces. Nutley was cutting the lashings of the boat—we had only the one—and Grogan was tangled up in the wheel. I made a flying leap below, and I could see the water boiling up already where the bottom was ripped, and got the dear old Luff out. Another chap, Milton, an awfully decent fellow, bobbed up alongside and we five got into the boat. By that time the destroyer was signaling and trying to pick us up with her searchlight, but for some unknown reason she didn't come near us. You wait till I get the Admiralty's ear, rot her! We lay around for a long while and tried to find some more of our men, but they didn't come up. Finally, about two in the morning, we started to make Lundy Island, the nearest land. But the wind came up before we were half-way there and there

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were only Nutley and me to row and only two oars and a piece of a third, and the sea was making fast. Seeing we couldn't reach Lundy, we tried keeping her headed south, thinking we'd fetch Penzance or somewhere down there. But the wind blew us straight out and we couldn't do a thing. The Lieutenant died about four o'clock. He'd been rather badly hurt, 'though I didn't know how badly then. I wasn't very fit myself. Nutley was the only one of us in decent shape, I guess."

"Milton, poor chap, died the next forenoon. You wouldn't believe that we could have blown all the way from about ten miles this side of Lundy to where you found us and never seen a sail. That's what we did, though. Practically, at any rate. That first night—meaning the second night, really—we saw lights twice and used up all the matches we had trying to make a flare. After that we had all we could do to keep in the boat, for a beastly storm came up and we thought we were done for. Not that we'd have cared much, anyway. We saw Fastnet Light through the rain, but it was ten miles away at least. The next morning we were out of sight of land and didn't know where we were. We hadn't any water and hadn't any food, and—oh, it was pretty bad, Troy! Grogan kept

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going until the evening before you got us. Then he went off. That left just Nutley and me. We wanted to get rid of the others to lighten the boat, but we couldn't lift them. That morning when you sighted us I was saying my prayers, or trying to. I thought Nutley was dead, too. He didn't answer when I spoke to him. He says I didn't speak, but he's quite wrong. Well, you know the rest."

"It must have been awful," said Nelson. "Is the man you spoke of all right now? Nutley, I mean?"

"Right as a trivet. But it makes a chap a bit serious to think that out of fourteen of us only two are alive today. Well, as our friends the French say, it is the war."

"What will you do now?" asked Nelson.

"Get back to Queenstown first, I fancy, and then try hard to get a command of my own. I say, I'd like that, what? There's no reason why I shouldn't have it, you know. Lots of chaps not half so brilliant and clever as I am have command of chasers."

"You sort of hate yourself, don't you?" laughed Nelson.

Tip grinned. "You've got to be a bit cocky or

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you don't get anything. Wait till I have a chin with the dear old Admiral!"

"Bet you he will put you in irons," jeered the other.

"Take you, Yank! Now what about that stunt of yours when you licked the German Navy alone and unassisted? Er, what is it you say? Come—come over, eh?"

"Come across?"

"Right-o! Come across!"

CHAPTER XXII

MART TURNS UP

AFTER that Tip and Nelson managed to be together a good deal, for although visiting the officers' quarters was something Nelson didn't attempt again, there was nothing to keep Tip from seeking out Nelson. Consequently, when the latter was off watch Tip was always on hand to share his idleness. In the few days that he remained aboard the *Gyandotte* the young midshipman became a favorite with officers and men alike. He was such a sunny, smiling, happy-go-lucky youth that it would have been impossible not to like him. Nelson suspected that the ship's officers would gladly have kept Tip in the ward-room on many occasions when that youth was down on the lower deck with Nelson or, eagerly curious, following Garey around Number Four gun and listening to the plugman's explanations.

There was just one exciting half-hour on the eastward run, and that came at dusk of the day

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that brought them in sight of the French coast. A U-boat appeared quite brazenly a mile northward and it fell to the lot of the *Gyandotte's* gunners to fire the first shot. Tip stood by on that occasion while Number Four gun crew got into action and while Nelson, now pointer, landed two five-inch shells on the patch of water that a moment before had held a sinking conning tower. That the shells did any damage is doubtful, nor were the three destroyers that raced to the spot any more successful with depth bombs. But the submarine didn't discharge any torpedoes, or, if she did, they went wild, and while the escort combed the sea the eighteen big transports, filled with Canadian troops, fled zig-zagging to safety.

The next morning the transports were safe within the nets and the convoys scattered to their bases, the *Gyandotte* following four of the destroyers up the coast by Penmarch Point, across the Channel entrance and past the Scilly Islands and so home to the green-rimmed waters of Queenstown.

Nelson found promotion awaiting him, as did four others, as a result of the *Gyandotte's* North Sea engagement. It was no longer Seaman Gunner Troy, but Third Class Gunner's Mate Troy, and he was soon wearing his single chevron and the crossed cannons on his sleeve and trying to

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avoid looking down at them when anyone was around. In honor of the advancement, Tip took him to dinner on shore and they made a very splendid occasion of it. Tip was still in the dark as to what was to happen to him, and spoke scathingly of the Admiralty because of its indifference to his future. Meanwhile, however, he seemed to be getting along very comfortably, spending a good deal of time at the Officers' Club or aboard ships in harbor, hobnobbing with his friends. The second day after the *Gyandotte's* return two events of interest occurred.

The first was the arrival in port of four new United States destroyers. They came gliding in soon after sun-up, the Stars-and-Stripes fluttering bravely, to a welcoming shriek of whistles from anchored craft. Big, able ships they were, long and low-cut abaft the forecastle, but with staunch, stiff bows. Triple torpedo tubes instead of twins: five-inch guns in the main battery instead of fours: "all the modern improvements," as Garey phrased it, and a reputed speed of thirty-four! Cheering and cheered, the newcomers swept to anchorage, and officers debarked and hurried shoreward to report to headquarters on the Hill. Those fine, new sea-terrors chirked everyone up immensely, and there

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was a marked increase in patriotic fervor, or, at least, in the expression of it. It was generally conceded now that the Kaiser's day was about over! Even Ferris, although critical of several features about the new craft, was heard to remark that he guessed "the Limies couldn't show anything better." Nelson got ashore in the afternoon and met Tip and was secretly very proud when Tip went into raptures over the new destroyers and sighed for the command of one of them.

The second event arrived some twenty minutes later and left Nelson momentarily breathless. He and Tip were on the way to Police Headquarters for a chat with the sergeant, who had become quite a crony when, turning a corner, they ran plump into a broad-shouldered American Jackie, who emitted a blood-curdling yell and rushed upon them. Tip squared off, resolved to sell his life dearly, but Nelson, after a moment's stupefaction, began to yell too, and the bystanders were treated to the sight of two hitherto apparently sane young sailors locked in each other's arms and doing a sort of bear dance about the pavement.

Tip retired to a position of safety and grinned sympathetically and counted "One, two, three! One, two, three! Swing!" until, laughing breathlessly, the two broke apart and became coherent.

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"Nep, you old horse-thief!"

"Mart! Where'd did you come from?"

"Right out of my little tin fish! She's down the harbor a ways. Got in this morning. I didn't know the old *Dry-an-rot* was here. Where's she lying? How are you? I say, owld de-ah, what's happened to your sleeve? Blow me, the lad's been promoted!"

"Mart, shake hands with Mr. Tipper. Tip, you've heard me speak of Townsend."

"Wot cheer, Townsend! As we say in dear old Amurica, put her thar!"

"Glad to know you!" laughed Mart, shaking hands. "You're one of the Arizona Tippers, of course. Can tell by your accent!"

"Right-o! Born and reared within sight of the jolly old Missouri!"

Tip declared that the occasion demanded food and drink and led the way to his favorite hostelry where, for the better part of two hours, the trio talked thirteen to the dozen and Mart recounted his adventures up north and got his tongue so twisted with Scottish words that Nelson feared for him. "Oh, it's all right if you like that sort of thing," declared Mart, "but excuse me! I got so finally that, begging Mr. Tipperary's pardon, it would have been a grand relief to me if the Brit-

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ish Grand Fleet had sunk at its moorings! I was never gladder to see the last of anything than I was to watch Kinnaird Head lose itself in the mist. It's those horrible mists that make life miserable up that way. And then the sea's beastly, too, most of the time. And cold! My word, fellows, submerging in Moray is like going into an ice-chest! Still, at that, it was interesting, and we had our thrills. One of 'em came when we took a practice plunge and something went wrong with the tanks and we stayed on the bottom for seven hours before we could get up again. Those little things make life interesting. I never knew until that day how many of us carried Bibles in our old kit bags!"

"And what are you up to now, if I may ask?" inquired Tip.

"You may ask, all right, friend, but don't expect me to tell you. They sent three of us down here, but we don't know why, unless it's to get the icicles out of the balance tanks. We had a weird run of it, too, down that east coast of yours. Do you know that there are exactly nine thousand different currents along there? Well, there are. I heard the Old Man say so, and he ought to know, for he was on duty every minute. He's ashore now somewhere. I heard him say he was going

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to get a bath and a shave, but I'll bet you anything you like he's filled himself with steak and onions and gone to sleep!"

"Speaking of steak and onions," murmured Tip wistfully, "let's eat something else."

"Tell me where you got the decorations, Nep," said Mart, waving the suggestion of food aside and nodding at Nelson's right sleeve. "You don't have to salute me any more, do you? Not that you ever did, though. What's the big idea? You in training to take Sims' place?"

"'E's a bloomin' 'ero, 'e is," explained Tip. "Fought hoff the 'ole German Nivy, 'e did, and got 'it in the 'ead and ain't been the sime since!"

Nelson gave a brief account of the *Gyandotte's* adventure, aided by Tip, who supplied a deal of interesting but scarcely credible matter, and Mart declared warmly that he had always known "Nep had it in him, by Jupiter!" After which, as Nelson and Mart both refused to eat any more or countenance the opening of further bottles of ginger beer, the trio went out and sought adventures along the water front. But adventures don't happen in Queenstown merely for the seeking, and they finally parted after making an appointment for the next day.

Nelson went back to the ship feeling very happy,

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for it was good to have Mart around again. He thought of a lot he meant to tell that youth at the first opportunity, for he had always found it easy to confide in him and was sure of sympathy, but the opportunity for confidences didn't arrive until long after, as it happened. Mart and Tip kept the appointment the next forenoon, but not Nelson, and, after kicking their heels along the quay for an hour, the two decided to pay a visit to the *Gyandotte* and enjoy the ineffable pleasure of watching Nelson work. Tip was certain of a welcome and Mart saw no reason for being refused on board, and so they engaged a waterman and set forth.

Once aboard, Tip set off to visit the officers' quarters as a matter of duty and politeness, and Mart sought Nelson. "Sorry I couldn't make it," said the latter when he had greeted his friend, "but they've granted no liberty at all today, for some reason. Looks as if we might be going out, although we're not due to until tomorrow. Want to see what a real ship looks like?"

Mart said he did, and asked if there was one in port. Presently, viewing the engine room, they were joined by Tip, who had wrested himself from the blandishments of the ward room officers. The three were still making a lagging round of the

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ship when one of the men, hurrying by, called to Nelson: "Better get your friends off, Mate. We're pulling out!"

"Fine hospitality!" complained Mart: "Well, be good, Nep. Come on, Tipperary, or we'll be on the briny!"

"I say," was the response. "I'd rather like it, you know. I wonder if they'd mind if I did."

"Why don't you ask?" said Nelson. "I wish you would. And I wish you might come, too, Mart. You might stow away!"

"No, thanks! I've seen enough sea duty for awhile. Me for shore and real food! Well, see you all later."

The anchors were already coming up and the siren was blowing a warning as they gained the deck. Mart looked over the side for the boat in which they had made the trip from shore and which had been instructed to wait for them. But they had made the mistake of paying off their boatman for the outward trip, and, like many happy-go-lucky denizens of that port, he saw no cause for further labor while there was a shilling in his pocket. At all events, he was not there, and Mart cast a dubious gaze about the harbor. Tip, who had dashed off to obtain permission to remain aboard and had got it, came back and went into

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fits of laughter over Mart's quandary. Nowhere was there a boat within signaling distance, and everyone was far too busy to give ear to Mart's troubles. Nelson sought the officer of the deck and held a hurried consultation, and presently returned with word that, if they found a chance of sending Mart back, they would do so, but that it looked very much to the officer as if he would have to swim or stay aboard!

"Oh, well, that's all right," said Mart. "I'll get Hail Columbia, of course, and be shot for desertion, but who cares? I say, Nep, when you get a chance see if you can persuade the radio shark to report me to the Q-4, will you?"

Nelson agreed and hurried off to his station, leaving Martin a bit worried and Tip chuckling. The *Gyandotte* turned and passed down the channel, signaling for the gate, and slid forth to the sea in the glory of a sunshiny November afternoon. Once past the mine fields she picked up her heels and went plunging southward in the teeth of a chill breeze dashing the foam from her bow and playing a tune on her aerial that sounded like the first efforts of a jew's-harp performer. Although Mart watched and hoped until Kinsale Head was lost to sight, nothing offered in the way of transportation back to Queenstown, and, for

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that matter, and in spite of the officer's promise, it is extremely doubtful if the *Gyandotte* would have slowed down to put him off. There was something very determined and objective in the cruiser's manner this evening, and Nelson secretly believed that nothing short of a "moldie" was likely to stop her.

Mart accepted the situation at last and threw off dull care. Nelson had succeeded in getting a wireless back to the *Q-4* explaining the cause of his desertion, and Mart declared that there was no more to be done. He was made welcome in Nelson's mess and ate a good supper and was given a hammock and a place to swing it. Tip was not much in evidence that evening, but they learned the next morning that he had slept most comfortably on an improvised bunk in the ward room. The cruiser met a heavy sea shortly before midnight and performed quite a few fancy steps between then and morning, and Mart, who should have been inured to any sort of discomfort, confessed the next day that the motion had been so strange to him that he had not slept much!

What the *Gyandotte's* original plan had been they never learned, for about nine that morning a messenger burst out of the wireless room and scurried to the bridge and the cruiser promptly

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showed signs of increased activity below decks and spouted blacker smoke and more of it and wheeled south-westward. And some three minutes later the whole ship's company knew that somewhere a U-boat was "strafing" an American merchantman and that the little *Gyandotte* was off to see about it!

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CAPTAIN COMES ABOARD

NELSON and Tip and Martin leaned beside Number Four gun and explained to each other at great length and with much vehemence just why there wasn't the ghost of a chance of the *Gyandotte* reaching the scene of action in time to take a hand. And then, having absolutely convinced themselves of that fact; they at once proceeded to prove just as conclusively that, being only sixty miles away when the message was caught, it would be the easiest thing in the world to arrive before it was too late. From which you will gather, and rightly, that all three wanted very much to have a finger in the pie and were too anxious and excited to be consistent.

The *Gyandotte* was shaking from stem to stern with the ardor of her engines and her two big stacks were spouting smoke. A good twenty-three miles an hour was what she was reeling off, and had the sea been a bit less unfriendly she might have bettered that by a fraction. What

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bothered the cruiser's men more than anything else was the fear that another patrol boat or convoy, either nearer to the scene or faster, had picked up the wireless and would, in the words of Mart, "beat them to it." There was one thing in their favor, however, which was that a low-lying mist shrouded the ocean, and they might be able to get within range of the U-boat before the latter took warning. They well knew how such jaunts usually ended. You pounded hard over sixty or eighty or a hundred miles and found either a lot of boats scattered over a ten mile radius or a merchantman just dipping her bows under for the final dive. Almost never did you glimpse the enemy. Of course it was a fine and satisfactory feat to rescue the steamer's crew, but if only once in a blue moon you might get in a few shots at the Hun it would be a welcome variation!

In foretop cage the lookout strained aching eyes through the haze, and all about the rail glasses were leveled when, shortly after eleven, the *Gyandotte* drew near the indicated position. Half an hour before the final message had been caught from the attacked vessel:

"S O S from O E L; please hurry, both engines done in; one hold on fire; will have to abandon soon."

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To this the *Gyandotte* had answered: "Be with you forty minutes; don't give up."

As there had come no further message it was feared that the merchantman, the American "Three L" liner *Antietam*, had been forced to surrender. At seven-thirty the General Quarters alarm sounded and the crew went to stations. A few minutes afterwards the foretop lookout reported smoke one point off the starboard bow and presently a deck lookout reported "something to port, sir, low on the water! Might be the sub!" A moment's search from the bridge and then, over the fire control system sped range and deflection.

"Number Four! Are you on?"

"On, sir!"

Seven thousand yards away over the port bow lay a faint something that might have been a dead whale until a flare of light shot through the mist from it and the sound of a shell came across the water. Further off, to starboard, a cloud of low-hanging smoke indicated the position of the *Antietam*, and it was toward this mark that the shell sped.

"Ready!" called Garey. "Fire!"

Number Four barked sharply as Nelson closed the contact. A dozen yards short of the subma-

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rine a column of water shot into the air. The spotter sent his correction of range. The elevating wheel moved slightly. A new shell was thrust in and the breech was closed.

“Ready!”

The target was growing smaller, sinking from sight now!

Again the gun spat and an instant of breathless anxiety followed. Then a cheer, shrill and wild, went up from the Number Four crew. The submarine’s conning tower, low-set between slanting wave-breakers, crumpled up as the five-inch shell struck it fairly!

“Got her!” shouted Garey, peering along the gun. “Give her another, boys! Hurry up, with that powder! Ram her! *Ready!*”

Number Two gun was firing now, but her range was short. Nelson again shot the spark and again the gun barked, but this time the shell passed over the target. The submarine was still awash. Why didn’t they submerge? Well, if they wanted more——

Number Two landed a shell under the stern and the U-boat plunged and rolled.

“*Ready!*” cried Garey.

Number Four spoke again and the forward fair-water flattened and the riddled tower disap-

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peared as though a giant hand had swept it into the sea. The U-boat canted. Nelson, darting a look across the water, wondered. Holding the gun on the target, he waited for the thud of the closing breech and Garey's "Ready!" Something was moving on the deck of the U-boat, an uncertain something amidst the tangled and twisted wreckage. The breech closed.

"*Rea—*" Garey's voice broke. "*Cease firing!*"

"They're coming up!" That was Tip, until the moment a silent if thrilled spectator.

"They're surrendering!" That was Garey, in hoarse triumph.

The U-boat arose, dripping, rocking drunkenly, on an uneven keel, her stern down and her sharp bow well out of water, and through the gaping hole amidship crawled men. One—two—three—and still they came, arms upheld in token of surrender, feet slipping on the wet, slanting deck. One fell, clutching wildly at the air, and disappeared into the water. He came up again and found a hold on something and clung there. None offered to help him back. The deck was lined with the Germans now and more were fighting at the torn hatchway. The *Gyandotte* slowed and swung nearer. Across the silence came, faintly, confused cries.

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“‘Kamerad!’ muttered a shellman disgustedly. ‘I’d ‘kamerad’ the swine if I had my way!’”

Over went the boats while the cruiser, with propellers idle, sidled closer through the leaping waves. The submarine’s bow rose higher and higher and it was evident that she would soon go down stern-first. Some of those on the deck, jostled by their companions, slid off into the water. Others deliberately plunged in and began to swim toward the battleship. From Number Four gun port they saw the boats halving the distance.

“I’d let ‘em swim,” said Garey. “They’ve all got life-vests on, every one of ‘em.”

“Every Hun of them,” corrected Tip softly. He plucked at Mart’s sleeve. “Let’s go topside and have a look.”

One of the small boats was pulling the Germans from the water, while the other went on toward the submarine on which some ten or a dozen men still maintained a precarious foothold on the forward deck. The numbers on the bow were easily read now: “*U C 46*”; and it was possible to pick out the officers by the tarnished gold braid on sleeves and caps. The *Gyandotte’s* propellers churned and the cruiser stopped and swung her bow to starboard. Signals were fluttering to the *Antietam*, promising speedy assistance. The small

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boats were coming back, loaded to the water's edge. Number Four's crew leaned out and gazed curiously down at the prisoners as they passed toward the boom. A sorry, dejected looking lot they were, thought Nelson. The commander, a tall, yellow-bearded man, was talking to the ensign in charge of the boat, smiling faintly as he gazed up toward the deck. The second boat, filled with dripping men who had been pulled out of the sea, passed next. On the faces of the sailors was a vague terror as they, too, looked apprehensively upward.

"They're expecting to be shot, I suppose," said Jennings. "Well, they deserve it, but they won't be. They'll have a nice easy life of it until the war's over. And plenty to eat, too, and, judging by the looks of 'em now, that's something that'll be welcome."

Nelson, gazing down, felt a tinge of compassion for the captives. They looked so hopelessly resigned to the fate they imagined awaited them. One moon-faced fellow had the temerity to smile up at the clustered rail, but the others scowled sullenly. In the middle of the boat one taller than the rest sat with head dropped on his hands, the picture of dejection.

"*Secure!*" came the command over the control,

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and Nelson and the others set about washing and oiling the bore and setting the gun in order. Meanwhile the fire and rescue signal had been given and the *Gyandotte*, turning her back on the sinking submarine, approached the merchantman. The fire and rescue party pulled around to the further side, out of the low-hanging smoke, and disappeared from sight. When the smoke lifted momentarily the *Antietam* showed herself a smart-looking freighter of some six thousand tons. But the German shells had worked sad havoc. Her decks were littered and both stacks were gashed by shrapnel. At least a dozen shots had taken effect on her hull and she was badly down by the head. It was half an hour before Number Four gun was secured and Nelson was free to return to the main deck to see what was going on. He found Martin and Tip there, and, grimy and oil-stained as he was, stopped for a moment's talk by the rail.

"Nep, you're some little shootist," declared Martin. "That second effort of yours was a work of art. You've got a good joke on Number Two gun, by the way. They got the word as soon as you fellows, but they had a mis-fire. They're a mad lot."

"Hard luck," said Nelson. "What I want to

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know, though, is why the sub didn't submerge when they saw us coming up. It wasn't a bit like their usual style."

"We got all that," said Tip. "If there's anything you wish to know, sir, enquire within. It seems the sub didn't submerge for the excellent reason that it couldn't. Someone——"

"The American, of course," interrupted Martin. "They've got him back in the Old Man's quarters now. Sure to have been him. What would you have done under the——"

"Quite so, old dear, quite so! That was their mistake, wasn't it? Took an American prisoner aboard, Troy, as a member of the crew. Funny thing, I say, but I heard months ago that they were having a hard time manning the subs. Well, he cooked their goose for them, what?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Nelson. "Do you mean that there was an American aboard that boat?"

"Just so! And he did something to their tanks——"

"Broke the valves, probably," corrected Martin. "Don't see just how he could, either. Still, they say he did. If he had——"

"You mean he fixed the boat so it couldn't dive?"

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"That's the way we got it. One of your fellows was talking to a petty officer and he says this American——"

"But how did an American come to be in the crew?"

"Oh, he was a prisoner and they needed men and just took him. Suppose they told him he'd have to do it or be shot. That's about the way they'd put it, I fancy. I dare say he agreed in the hope that some time he'd either be able to escape or"—Tip shrugged his shoulders—"drown himself and the rest of them. That's what I'd do if they put it to me like that."

"An American!" exclaimed Nelson. "Did you see him?"

"Not close. They took him back to the Old Man. He's there yet, I guess." Martin looked back along the deck. "They've got the officers there, too. One of them——"

"What is it, Troy?" cried Tip. "I say, you don't think——"

"I—I don't know," muttered Nelson, wide-eyed, tremulous.

Martin stared uncomprehendingly for an instant. Then: "By Jove!" he exclaimed awedly. "Nep, it couldn't be, could it? Listen! This

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man's tall and thin; looked sort of half-starved; grayish hair, I think——"

"Gray?" faltered Nelson. Then he shook his head, and: "It probably isn't," he said. "Dad's hair is brown, about like mine. I thought—maybe——"

"Hold up!" cried Tip. "Anyone's hair might be gray after a year in a German prison camp!"

"That's so!" agreed Martin.

Nelson looked from one to the other anxiously. "Do you think—it could be?" he whispered.

"I wouldn't hope too hard," muttered Martin.

Nelson stared thoughtfully at his grimy hands and then over toward where the *Antietam* lay, the smoke lessening about her torn deck. Finally: "I guess I'll go and—and make sure," he murmured.

"Right-o!" said Tip cheerfully. "Like me to go along, old man?"

Nelson shook his head, smiling faintly. "No, because it mayn't be, and—and then I—I guess I don't want anyone around!"

At the after companion he halted. He had no right to go where he was going without orders. And what should he say? Perhaps he had better wait. . . .

But he went on. In the wardroom passage he

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paused again. Through a partly open door ahead came faint voices, for the ship with its idle engines was very still. He listened, his heart beating hard and chokingly. That was the captain talking now: “. . . After what you’ve been through, Captain . . . make you comfortable . . . find some clothes . . .” Then another voice came to the listener, a deeper voice, speaking slowly, wearily. . . .

Nelson went forward like one in a dream. The door of the captain’s cabin stood half open. On the threshold he stopped and raised his hand in salute, and the captain, glancing up, saw him.

“Well, my man?” he demanded sharply.

The second occupant of the cabin was hidden by the door.

Nelson answered in a queer, weak voice: “Beg pardon, sir. May I speak to my father?”

“Eh? To your father!” The captain’s gaze swept perplexedly from Nelson to the tall, gaunt figure in the chair beside him. “Bless my soul! What—what——”

The man beside him was on his feet, and striding to the door, had thrown it open.

“*Bless my soul!*” repeated the captain.

“Nelson, boy! Is it you?” cried the stranger.

Nelson’s arms went out and he clung to the tall

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figure with straining grasp of dirty, oil-stained hands.

"Gee, Dad, I thought you were dead!" he sobbed.

The captain blew his nose loudly, and: "Bless my soul!" he said. "Bless my soul!"

Twilight crept out of the east over leagues of empty sea. The *Antietam*, patched and tinkered, hobbled slowly toward the oncoming darkness. A mile away the *Gyandotte* kept her company. A few miles astern a spreading patch of oil marked the grave of the *U C 46*. For the rest all was tumbling sea, gray green ahead, glinting with copper lights behind where the last rays of the sun touched it. Somewhere behind the darkening horizon lay the shores of France—and safety for the wounded, corpse-laden *Antietam*.

In a quiet niche of the lower deck a little group sat and talked after supper. Two of them sat very close together, a tall, thin man with grayish hair and a smiling, wistfully happy youth of eighteen. With them were Martin and Tip and Garey. Captain Troy had told his story for them and they had listened raptly. They had heard how, after the explosion of the first shell aboard the *Jonas Clinton*, he had come to himself in the

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water, and how, dazed by a blow on the head and consequently unconscious, he had vainly tried to get back to the schooner, and had only recovered full consciousness days later, when he found himself lying in a bunk in the submarine. They had treated him fairly enough and had landed him a week later on German soil. After that he had been taken, with many other prisoners of war, to a great prison camp in East Prussia. He had been there almost a year when he and nearly a hundred others of many nationalities, all of whom had been sailors, were packed into cars and shipped westward again. At some port—the Captain believed it to have been Bremerhaven—they had been given their choice of going onto the submarines or working on the fortifications on Heligoland. Captain Troy had hesitated but a moment. The sea was his home and, once afloat again, he believed he could make his escape. But there had never been a chance. He had been the only prisoner aboard and they had watched his every movement. The *U C 46* had been out nearly three weeks before she had sighted her first prey, the *Antietam*. By that time Captain Troy had in a measure gained the confidence of the officers and crew and was given work in the engine room. His chance had come that day when

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the U-boat had gone to the surface and the crew had been serving the deck guns or watching the destroying of the merchantman. He had not tampered with the valves, for he had not known how to, but, finding a moment when he had the motor room to himself, he had managed to disconnect and short-circuit the main feed cable between battery and dynamo. He had expected to be found out and killed, but, with the *Gyandotte's* shells raining about them, the officers of the U-boat had been too confused to trace the trouble. Finding that the motors would not work and that they could not submerge, they had blown out the tanks again and surrendered. Evidently no suspicion had attached to him, for he had been allowed to follow the others on deck, from where he had leaped overboard and tried to reach the cruiser.

"And now, sir," asked Tip when the tale was ended, "what will you do?"

"Get back home as soon as I can," replied the Captain unhesitatingly, "and find another ship. She'll be steam this time, I guess. And she'll have a gun and a gun-crew aboard her, and all I'm asking is that one of those dirty 'fishes' will poke her pipes up where I can see 'em!"

"I wish I was going to be along," said Nelson. "I'd like to point that gun for you, dad!"

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"Then come. I'd be mighty glad to have you, boy."

But Nelson shook his head slowly. "I guess not, sir. I think I'll stay right here. I suppose I couldn't change if I wanted to, and I don't want to. No, sir, I'll stick and see it out on the *Gyan-dotte*."

"Well, just as you say, Nelson. I'd like to have you with me, but you seem to fit pretty well where you are. Maybe it won't be for long now, son. There's got to be an end of it some time."

"And it's going to be the right end, when it comes," said Tip emphatically. "No half-way business, Captain Troy. We're going to fight Germany to her knees, sir!"

"Aye, sir, I hope we will! I wish I was young enough to take a hand! But I ain't. Nelson here'll have to do my fighting for me, I guess."

"Well," laughed Martin, "he seems to be able to! Eh, Tipperary?"

"Rather! What price Number Four gun? Speech, Mr. Garey!"

Garey smiled quietly. "Number Four speaks for herself! And," he added, "every time she speaks she says something!"

"I guess," said Nelson, "I wouldn't like any other gun so well. Nor any other ship so well."

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So I guess we'll see it through together until we get what we came after, the little old *Gyandotte* and I."

"Victory for the Allies!" said Tip.

"Peace for the whole world," added Martin.

"Yes," said Nelson soberly, "and the Freedom of the Seas!"

(2)

THE END

AUG 14 1928

